Syrian Resettlement Practices and Experiences in the United States: A Nationwide Survey and Phenomenological Study

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Damir S. Utrzan, M.S., LMFT

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Elizabeth A. Wieling, Ph.D., LMFT
Timothy F. Piehler, Ph.D., LP

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Dedication

For my parents – Drasko and Ermina Utrzan (née Veletanlic) – and for all families fleeing violence around the world. May their cries for help not be in vain.

Abstract

Violence in Syria has displaced an unprecedented number of people. But a relatively complex asylum process in the United States, combined with rising anti-refugee sentiment, challenges its longstanding values of welcoming the "tired, poor, and huddled masses yearning to breathe free" (Lazarus, 1883). This dissertation adds to the broader understanding of refugee resettlement and placement practices. In the first aim, 49 leaders of non-government organizations – which collectively resettled 224,491 refugees, including 7,366 Syrians between 2013 and 2016 – were surveyed about placement efforts. In the second aim, 12 refugees from Syria – 8 men and 4 women – were interviewed about their experience across each stage of resettlement (i.e., pre-resettlement, resettlement/ migration, and post-resettlement/adjustment). Findings suggest that both resettlement organizations and refugees are impacted by the sociopolitical climate. Organizations are faced with more demands and less resources; refugees are unsure about their future in the United States but grateful for a second chance. Recommendations for policy change, along with clinical and pedagogical implications, are discussed in the context of these findings.

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List of Abbreviations

AAMFT.....American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy
APA.....American Psychological Association
AI.....Amnesty International
BBC.....British Broadcasting Corporation
BCE.....Before Common Era
CBP.....Customs and Border Protection
CBT.....Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
CDC.....Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CENTCOM.....United States Central Command
CIA.....Central Intelligence Agency
CEO.....Chief Executive Officer
COO.....Chief Operating Officer
CPO.....Chief Program Officer
CRS.....Congressional Research Service
CRM.....Community Readiness Model
CVT.....Center for Victims of Torture
CWS.....Church World Services
DHHS.....Department of Health and Human Services
DHS.....Department of Homeland Security
DOS.....Department of State
EO.....Executive Order
EU.....European Union
ECDC.....Ethiopian Community Development Council
EMM.....Episcopal Migration Ministries
FBI.....Federal Bureau of Investigation
FDNSD.....Fraud Detection and National Security Directorate
GCIM.....Global Commission on International Migration
GPO.....Government Printing Office

HIAS.....Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society
HRRP.....Human Research Protection Program
HRW.....Human Rights Watch
ICE.....Immigration and Customs Enforcement
IDP.....Internally Displaced Persons
INS.....Immigration and Naturalization Services
IOM.....International Organization for Migration
IRB.....Institutional Review Board
IRC.....International Rescue Committee
IRAP.....International Refugee Assistance Project
LIRS.....Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services
LMFT.....Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist
MFP DCF.....Minority Fellowship Program, Dissertation Completion Fellowship
MFT/s.....Marriage and Family Therapy/Therapists
MNAR.....Data Missing not at Random
MPR.....Minnesota Public Radio
NBER.....National Bureau of Economic Research
NCC.....National Counterterrorism Center
NCCIC.....National Counterterrorism Center and Intelligence Community
ORR.....Office of Refugee Resettlement
PHR.....Physicians for Human Rights
PI.....Principal Investigator
PPCT.....Process-Person-Context-Time Interaction
PRM.....Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration
RPC.....Refugee Processing Center
RSC.....Resettlement Support Center
R&P.....Resettlement and Placement
SAMHSA.....Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration
SCOTUS.....Supreme Court of the United States

TSA.....Transportation Security Administration
UN.....United Nations
UNESCO.....United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR.....United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF.....United Nations International Children's Fund
USCCB.....United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
USCIS.....United States Citizenship and Immigration Services
USCRI.....United States Committee on Refugees and Immigrants
USRAP.....United States Refugee Admission Program
VOLAG.....Voluntary Agency
VPN.....Virtual Private Network
WF.....Wilson-Fish Program
WRAPS.....Worldwide Refugee Admissions Processing System
WR.....World Relief

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Chapter 1: Introduction

> *I must start at the beginning, if I can find it. Beginnings are elusive things. Just when you think you have hold of one, you look back and see another, earlier beginning, and an earlier one before that.*
>
> *Hillary Jordan*
> American Novelist

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum is a reminder of the atrocities committed during the Second World War. It also represents humankind's promise to never repeat them again. But this promise has been broken repeatedly, more recently when violence and persecution around the world displaced over 65 million people (Edwards, 2016). "Voluntary repatriation" (i.e., return to country of origin) is the preferred solution to displacement. Threats of persecution and the absence of long-term solutions to sociopolitical instability make resettlement to another country more appropriate. Furthermore, the United States has a longstanding history of refugee resettlement, but its program has since become "underfunded, overstretched, and failing to meet the basic needs" (GPO, 2010, p. v) of refugees.

This dissertation consists of two studies. The first study (i.e., aim one) evaluated the United States Refugee Resettlement Program (USRAP) and each organization's ability to facilitate resettlement efforts of Syrians refugees. The second study (i.e., aim two) interviewed Syrian refugees, navigating widely-accepted resettlement stages (i.e., pre-displacement, resettlement/migration, and post-displacement/adjustment), to better understand their experiences. The impetus, as noted in my personal reflective statement and reiterated by the former United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR, 2013a), António Guterres, was "because the crisis has become the great tragedy of this

century." This chapter provides an overview of the global refugee crisis with a focus on Syria, including its early (6,000 BCE-1925) and modern (1925-Present) history. It also describes how a peaceful uprising that swept across the Middle East (i.e., Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, and Bahrain) plunged Syria into a brutal civil war with insurmountable civilian casualties.

Global Refugee Crisis

By the end of 2012, over 35.8 million people were affected by violence around the world (UNHCR, 2017). This includes more than: a) 10.4 million refugees, b) 900,000 asylum-seekers, c) 17.6 million internally displaced persons (IDPs), and d) 3.3 million stateless persons. These figures increased dramatically to over 54.6 million people by the end of 2014, which includes: a) 14.3 million refugees, b) 1.8 million asylum-seekers, c) 32.2 million IDPs, and d) 3.4 million stateless persons (see Figure 1). More recent estimates yield over 67.7 million people affected by violence around the world (UNHCR, 2017). Most of these people remain within the border of their country and are considered *internally displaced*, 19.9 million flee persecution and are considered *asylum-seekers* or *refugees*. The number of children fleeing persecution increased nearly 80% between 2010 and 2015 (UNICEF; United Nations International Children's Fund, 2016).

These figures yield 24 people displaced from their homes every minute of every day (UNHCR, 2016b). Most people are from the Middle East and Africa, followed by Asia and the Pacific, the Americas, and Europe. Over 105,000 refugees are resettled to developed countries every year. Although nearly one million refugees reach the borders of Europe in search of asylum, the aforementioned estimates only reflect a fraction of the people displaced around the world.

To that end, Syrians account for over 5 million people – or approximately 40% – of refugees in need of resettlement (UNHCR, 2017). This includes 2 million people registered in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, and Lebanon; nearly 3 million people registered in Turkey, and over 29,000 people registered in North Africa. Current trends suggest that the UNHCR and its affiliates will not be able to process 33% of resettlement applications in 2017 (UNHCR, 2016a). These are the most recent estimates as of this writing.

To understand the experience of Syrians navigating resettlement in the United States, it is important to understand Syria and the USRAP. Although some people may consider historic accounts unimportant, they organize our understanding of the present. These accounts also provide us with insight into the relationship between events and the underlying contribution of human nature. In other words, history clarifies how feelings and attitudes following an event are related. The importance of history cannot be overstated because it could mean the difference between war and peace.

History of Syria

The Syrian Arab Republic, commonly referred to as Syria, is located in the Middle East. It borders Turkey to the North, Iraq to the East, Jordan to the South, and Israel to the Southwest (see Figure 2). It covers an area of over 71,000 square miles, which is approximately the size of Washington State. The climate is simultaneously humid – because of the Mediterranean Sea – and dry – because of the Syrian Desert. This makes only 25% of land arable (CIA; Central Intelligence Agency, 2016). In 2014, around 17 million people lived in Syria. This made it approximately 19 times smaller than the United States.

The ethnic make-up of Syrians reflects their immediate geographic neighbors. Aside from smaller ethnic groups such as Albanians, Bosnians, and Georgians, Syria has four major groups. Syrian and Palestinian Arabs are the largest ethnic group followed by Kurds, Syrian Turkmen, and Assyrians. Most Syrians identify as Sunni Muslim with a minority identifying as Shia Muslims, Christians, and Druze. The official language is Arabic although English and French are widely spoken. Diversity, although often viewed as a strength, has contributed to a long history of conflict in Syria (Blanchard, Humud, & Nikitin, 2014).

Early History (6000 BCE-1925)

Syria is considered a source of early humanity and civilization. Mesopotamians settled around 6000 BCE (Mark, 2015). Palmyra, a desert oasis north of Damascus, contains ancient monuments dating back to the first and second century. As the crossroad of several civilizations, it is referred to by archeologists as the *cradle of civilization* (Miller, 2001). For these reasons, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, n.d.) designated Palmyra as a world heritage site.

Between 1245 BCE and 612 BCE, Syria was controlled by the Assyrian Empire. After its fall, the western region maintained the name "Assyria." Despite competing theories, evidence suggests that the name "Syria" originates from this early shift in power (Mark, 2015). The name remained throughout the Persian, Holy Roman, and Byzantine Empires. Access to the Mediterranean Sea, and thus valuable trade routes, made Syria a highly desirable geopolitical location. Conversion efforts by the Roman Catholic Church were largely unsuccessful, which allowed Islam to flourish during the Holy Roman and Byzantine Empires.

In 637 CE, the Battle of the Iron Bridge solidified Islam's presence in Syria and led to installment of the Rashidun Caliphate (Mark, 2015). While civility between Roman Catholics and Muslims prevailed following this transition of power, non-Muslims were barred from serving in the military. This prompted most Christians to convert so they could enlist. By 1300 CE, the Ottoman Empire rose to power. Ottoman Turks, who would eventually conquer much of Europe and Asia, reached Syria in 1516. Although they were in power until the First World War, Syria did not prosper under their leadership. The population decreased by 30% and villages, once vibrant reflections of Syrian culture, became abandoned (Collelo, 1988).

Modern History (1925-Present)

Syria became a French mandate following the First World War. In 1925, dissatisfaction with changes imposed by the French led Syrians to fight for their independence. France resisted the liberation and bombed the capital, which resulted in a long and violent conflict (Leukefeld, 2011). Syria's history remained tumultuous and characterized by disagreement between the presidency and military even after its independence. In 1946, Syria re-declared independence from France with assistance from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (i.e., United Kingdom).

Two years later Syria invaded Palestine with intent to prevent Israel from being established in the Middle East. This was followed by two failed coup d'états'. A successful coup in 1949 replaced the multiparty system with a parliamentary system. After Israel's invasion of Egypt, and subsequently the United Kingdom and France, Syria entered into a bilateral agreement (i.e., involving and affecting both parties) with the Soviet Union. The increase in Syria's military capabilities with support from the Soviet

Union threatened stability in the region. It also led to people living in a constant state of emergency (Leukefeld, 2011).

In 1958, Syria and Egypt unified to create the United Arab Republic. Syria seceded three years later following a successful coup by members of the Ba'ath Party. In 1966, a military committee successfully carried out another coup that made the Ba'ath Party becoming a political movement. It also contributed to a relatively unknown and covert armed conflict between Syria and Israel. Disagreement between President Salah Jadid and Commander Hafez al-Assad, the current president's father and hereinto referred to by his first name, quickly followed. Their disagreement escalated three years later after which Hafez seized power from Jadid and appointed himself the undisputed leader of Syria. "Strike the enemy's settlements, turn them into dust, pave the Arab roads with the skills of Jews," reflects the priority Hafez placed on defending Arab interests against Israel after seizing power (Oren, 2003, p. 293). Hafez died in 2000 and was succeeded by his son, Bashar.

Bashar graduated from elementary and high school in Damascus (Zisser, 2006). He studied medicine at Damascus University, the oldest public university in Syria, and completed an ophthalmology (i.e., eye medicine) residency in the United Kingdom (Leverett, 2005). Bashar had no political aspirations but was propelled through the military ranks after his older brother Bassel's unexpected death in 2000 (Zisser, 2006). It was widely believed that Bassel, a civil engineer with a doctorate in military science, would have succeeded Hafez prior to death (Hemmer, 2003). There was hope for reform and increased freedom given Bashar's medical training in the United Kingdom (Horn, 2012). But everything changed after the United States invaded Iraq.

National Flags

It is important to briefly discuss the Syrian flag, specifically its evolution, because it reflects the country's tumultuous political history. Before 1918, Syria was part of the Ottoman Empire and used their flag (see Figure 3). A new flag was adopted after the United Kingdom established the Arab Military Administration in 1918 (see Figure 4). The British controlled most of modern Iraq, Palestine, and Transjordan. Most of Syria, Lebanon, and Turkey were controlled by the French. General Henri Gouraurd, the French High Commissioner for Syria, adopted a new flag that was used for ten years (see Figure 5). A French mandate in 1930 established the Syrian Republic, and thereby, a new flag (see Figure 6). The Syrian-drafted constitution states:

> "Syrian flag will be as follows: length double width, and divided into three parallel and equal colors, the highest green, white, then black, that the white section contains a straight line three red five-pointed stars" (Article IV, Part I, Constitution of the Syrian Republic).

Although France withdrew from Syria when the Second World War erupted (Lawson, 2006), the flag remained a symbol of Syrian unity. Three red stars originally represented the districts of Aleppo, Damascus, and Deir ez-Zor.

This changed after addition of the Latakia and Jebel Druze districts (i.e., the first star came to represent the districts of Aleppo, Damascus, and Deir es-Zor, the second star the Jebel Druze district, and the third star the district of Latakia). This flag was used until 1958 and establishment of the United Arab Republic. Two entities currently claim *de jure* (i.e., entitlement) over Syria with each government using a different flag to represent their state. The incumbent government, led by Bashar and the Ba'ath Party, is using a red-white-black flag originally adopted in 1980 by Hafez (see Figure 7). The interim

government, formed to overthrow Bashar and the Ba'ath Party, adopted a war flag established following the Syrian-drafted constitution (see Figure 6).

Civil War

The civil war in Syria is similar to its historical predecessors because it evolved over years and implicated different parties. To meet the needs of younger Syrians, Bashar permitted use of mobile telephones, the Internet, and satellite television (Leukefeld, 2011). Syrians enjoyed these freedoms until the United States invaded Iraq, which prompted Bashar to enact a state of emergency reminiscent of his father's governing style. In 2011, a nationwide uprising in Tunisia and Egypt led to Presidents Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and Hosni Mubarak, respectively, being overthrown. A group of adolescent boys, led by then 14-year-old Naief Abazid, spray painted "You are next, Doctor Bashar al-Assad" on the wall of their school (see Figure 8).

Their arbitrary detention and torture by security forces loyal to the al-Assad Regime led to a revolt that many consider the catalyst to war (McEvers, 2012). Bashar responded to the uprising with brutal force. He authorized use of indiscriminate weapons, extrajudicial executions, and imprisonment of protesters (HRW; Human Rights Watch, 2017). That same year, a group of Syrian military defectors formed the Free Syrian Army with intent to overthrow the al-Assad Regime and Ba'ath Party. This instigated a series of events which became known as the "Arab Spring;" plunging Syria into a conflict with higher displacement estimates than those of the Second World War (UNHCR, 2016b).

In 2017, Bashar launched a heavy airstrike purportedly against defectors in the Idlib governorate. The release of toxic sarin gas, which leads to death within minutes after inhalation (Hiltermann, 2007), killed at least 74 innocent civilians while injuring

more than 557 (Abdulrahman, al-Falouji, Toujan, and Ali, 2017). Within 72-hours, United States Central Command (CENTCOM) launched a series of cruise missiles at the airfield from which the chemical airstrike was suspected to have originated (BBC; British Broadcasting Corporation, 2017). Two months later the United States deployed a semi-truck mounted missile system, after previously deploying over 400 soldiers, to allegedly combat terrorism (Browne, 2017). This unprecedented military intervention is suspected to increase already rising tension in the region. Ashraf el Nour, director of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) office to the United Nations, stated that the "global population displacement is at a record high and that the tragedy facing the Syrian people is horrific" (UN, 2017).

United States Resettlement Program History

The United States has a longstanding history of refugee resettlement, but its program has become "underfunded, overstretched, and failing to meet the basic needs" (GPO, 2010, p. v) of refugees. Before 1875, the federal government did not regulate immigration and restrictions were largely imposed by individual states. This changed when hostility towards Chinese laborers in California prompted Congress to pass legislation reducing the number of Chinese immigrants admitted to the United States (Page Act of 1875). The federal government limited the number of Chinese immigrants admitted while the overall number of immigrants continued to rise. Congress passed the most significant restrictive legislation on the admission of immigrants ten years later (Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882). Taken together, these legislative acts laid the foundation for federal oversight over immigration (Immigration Act of 1882).

Early History (1882-1921)

Chinese nationals were restricted from immigrating to the United States on grounds of "endangering the good order of certain localities" (Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882). They were effectively made "aliens," and thereby, barred from citizenship. This legislation also affected Chinese-Americans insofar as those who left the United States for any reason had to obtain a certificate of re-entry. A set of amendments the following year further tightened nationality requirements and prohibited anyone from Asian descent, whether native-born or naturalized, from leaving and returning to the United States.

The first set of comprehensive immigration laws in the United States were enacted in 1882 (Immigration Act of 1882). They laid the foundation for future immigration law and policy by establishing federal oversight over immigration, assigned immigrant enforcement responsibilities to the treasury secretary. This public official had to regulate admission of immigrants and collect a tax of 50¢ per person. While equivalent to $12.61 today (United States Inflation Calculator, 2017), the average daily wage of a laborer in 1882 was 12¢ (NBER; National Bureau of Economic Research, 2017). The immigration tax per person was nearly 25% of the average person's daily earnings.

It also barred "undesirables" from being admitted into the United States, including "any convict, lunatic, idiot, or any person unable to take care of himself or herself without becoming a public charge" (Immigration Act of 1882). The bar of undesirables later proved to be a financial deterrent to immigration. Congress established the superintendent of immigration nearly ten years later. By creating this office, which is the predecessor to Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) and subsequently United

States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), Congress reaffirmed the federal governments oversight over immigration.

Before 1921, the United States had no numerical limit or ceiling for immigrants or refugees. There were also no legal differences between these groups (i.e., immigrants and refugees). The only requirements for admission were: a) being free of dangerous communicable diseases and b) no previous criminal convictions (Immigration Act of 1882). The federal government remained uninvolved in the resettlement of immigrants and refugees, shifting the burden to organizations and private citizens, but began imposing ceilings in 1921 (Emergency Quota Act of 1921). This set the annual quota of any nationality at 2% of the number of foreign-born residents. The number of immigrants from Great Britain and Italy fell by 19% and 90%, respectively (Murray, 1976). Aside from exempting refugees from the literacy requirement for admission into the United States, it failed to designate them as a unique group.

Modern History (1951-Present)

In response to widespread devastation following the Second World War, representatives of 50 nations met at the United Nations Conference on International Organization to draft the United Nations Charter. This declaration was "based on the principle sovereign equality of all nations." The UNHCR was established to protect the rights of refugees, asylum-seekers, and stateless persons (UNHCR, 2016c). This was followed by a multilateral treaty that defined refugee, set out the rights of people seeking asylum, and outlined the responsibilities of nations granting refugee status (Refugee Convention of 1951). An amendment made the treaty universal by removing its geographic and temporal (i.e., time) limitations (Refugee Convention Protocol of 1967).

Resettlement Estimates

Since 1975, the United States has resettled over 3 million refugees. Annual admission estimates have ranged from a low of 27,111 in 2002 to a high of 207,000 in 1980. More than 250,000 refugees were admitted following the Second World War. Most refugees resettled to the United States between 1975 and 1990 were from Asia. This changed in the 1990s with nearly as many refugees being admitted from the former Soviet Union. A brief increase in the admission of refugees from the Balkans between 1998 and 2000 was followed by an increase in refugees from Northeast and South Asia.

In 2016, the United States admitted 84,995 refugees. Of those admitted, 14,309 were Syrians (RPC; Refugee Processing Center, 2016). The top three resettlement destinations for Syrian refugees were: a) California (1,647), b) Michigan (1,640), and c) Texas (1,035). According to the RPC (2016), Syrian refugees were not resettled to: a) Alabama, b) Alaska, c) Arkansas, d) Delaware, e) Hawaii, f) Mississippi, g) Montana; h) South Dakota, i) Vermont, and j) Wyoming (see Figure 9). Estimates changed briefly, the effects of which are discussed later, following an Executive Order (EO) by the Trump Administration.

Structure of United States Resettlement Program

The Vietnam War left countless people homeless and vulnerable to persecution from the Communist Party. This prompted the United States to resettle up to 200,000 people from Southeast Asia (Indochina Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1975). The federal government abandoned its previous immigration restrictions by adopting the 1967 Protocol while not signing the Refugee Convention of 1951 (Fitzpatrick, 1997). In doing so, it defined “refugee” as “a person outside of his or her country or nationality

who is unable or unwilling to return because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution" (Refugee Act of 1980). This legislation established an official and comprehensive immigration policy in the United States (Bon Tempo, 2008), which is the precursor to the present United States Refugee Admission Program (USRAP).

The USRAP is a public-private partnership between government agencies and non-governmental organizations. While states receive funding from the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) for services such as cash and medical assistance, they also contract with non-governmental organizations for other resettlement services. The role of states can therefore be separated into three categories: a) self-run, b) alternative, and c) in collaboration with non-governmental organizations (Mayorga & Morse, 2017).

Thirty-two states operate through a self-run mechanism in collaboration with the federal government. Twelve states operate through, and receive funding from, the Wilson-Fish (WF) program (i.e., an alternative mechanism). This program seeks to promote early employment and self-sufficiency, increase coordination between non-governmental resettlement organizations, and ensure the presence of resettlement programs in receiving states (ORR, 2015). Five states operate in collaboration with non-governmental organizations. These interagency collaborations illustrate the resettlement program's complexity.

Government

The USRAP is continuously evolving. While implementation procedures change annually depending on the sociopolitical climate, it has not been updated since the resettlement of refugees from Southeast Asia in the 1970s. The program operates at the federal level and involves the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM).

The PRM is responsible for managing reception and placement programs (R&P) around the world, proposing refugee admission ceilings, and determining resettlement priorities. The annual admission ceiling is important insofar as allocations are adjusted by region of the United States (Zong & Batalova, 2017; Bruno, 2016). This reason, among several others, is why the first aim evaluated regional differences between R&P practices. The USRAP also collaborates with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), in addition to, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The ORR, which is a program in the DHHS, aids with resources to help refugees become self-sufficient (ORR, 2016).

Public

The USRAP also involves non-governmental organizations to facilitate refugee resettlement processing. These organizations, which are referred to as Resettlement Support Centers (RSCs), are: a) Church World Service (CWS), b) Ethiopian Community Development Council (ECDC), c) Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM), d) Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), e) International Rescue Committee (IRC), f) Lutheran Immigration and Social Services (LIRS), g) United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI), h) United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), and i) World Relief (WR).

Conclusion

An overview of the global refugee crisis was provided in this chapter. It traced the history of the Syrian Arab Republic, commonly referred to as Syria, from its occupation by the Assyrian Empire to the present conflict. This chapter also outlined the historical foundation of refugee resettlement in the United States, including estimates and its

evolution from the public sector to a public-private partnership. The second chapter provides a relatively comprehensive literature review on the effects of displacement and resettlement. It further describes the USRAP with an emphasis on the security screening process. It then outlines the epistemological stance and theoretical frameworks used to guide both studies from conceptualization through interpretation and presentation of results.

The third chapter delineates the methodology used by focusing on procedures, a description of participants, and data analysis. It also provides an account of participant and research narratives, along with the process used to establish trust-worthiness, in the second study. Findings organized by aim are presented in the fourth chapter. The fifth chapter offers an integrated discussion, consistent with the presentation of each study, that includes different implications (i.e., policy, clinical, and pedagogical) based on findings.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

> *You know, those of us who leave our homes in the morning and expect to find them there when we go back, it is hard for us to understand what the experience of a refugee might be like.*
>
> *Naomi Shihab Nye*
> American-Born Palestinian Novelist

This chapter presents a current literature review about the stages of resettlement. It also outlines unique challenges of "asylum-seekers," the legal status people are assigned after fleeing but before being granted "asylum," during each stage. While previous studies make an important contribution to refugee resettlement, they have largely neglected the experience of refugees in the United States collectively navigating these stages Research has also not evaluated how immigration and nationality laws in the United States impact the refugee experience. A reason for this discrepancy, amongst countless others, is that refugees are not a homogenous group (Zetter, 2007).

Considerable research has been dedicated to understanding the refugee experience since Drachman and Ryan (1992) outlined the stages of resettlement. There is uniform agreement on these stages (i.e., pre-resettlement, resettlement/migration, and post-resettlement/adjustment). While evidence suggests several circumstances inherent to the process within each stage, there has been more focus on the last stage (i.e., post-resettlement/adjustment) for logistic reasons (e.g., inability to anticipate displacement). Similar circumstances across each stage include physical (Kalt, Hossain, Kiss, & Zimmerman, 2013), psychological (McColl et al., 2010), and sexual (Vu et al., 2014) trauma, social isolation (Simich, Beiser, & Mawani, 2003), identity fragmentation (Zetter, 1991, 2007), and low self-esteem (Keyes & Kane, 2004).

Stage 1: Pre-Resettlement

As previously noted, the term "refugee" is a legal designation. A person is not considered a "refugee" until awarded protective status (i.e., asylum); until then, they are considered an "asylee" or "asylum-seeker." At the pre-resettlement stage, a refugee is unable to return to his or her country due to fear of persecution based on several grounds. These include race, religion, nationality, or membership in a particular social group/political opinion. During the "pre-resettlement stage," people decide whether to leave, and if so, make the necessary preparations.

There are several reasons why people choose to leave their country of origin. The Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM) evaluated key determinants of people seeking asylum in European Union (EU) member countries (Middleton, 2005). Consistent with previous studies, the primary motivation for people was protection (i.e., safety). The prospect of rebuilding their lives was a secondary motivation. This included living in another country until return was possible. A loss of hope, growing cost of living or deepening poverty, limited opportunities, decreasing availability of aid, and absence of safety are some reasons why people left Syria (Awad, 2015). Other reasons include, but are not limited to, physical and psychological trauma and being unable to live without disruption.

Wachter, Cook Heffron, Snyder, Busch Nsonwu, and Busch-Armendariz (2015) examined the resettlement challenges of Congolese women in the United States. They found that this stage is complex and dynamic (i.e., continuously changing). This places refugees at higher risk of developing mental health problems, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, and depression (Schweitzer, Melville, Steel, & Lacherez,

2006). Pre-resettlement has not been evaluated with the same rigor as other stages given logistical challenges.

Stage 2: Resettlement/Migration

The second stage is "resettlement/migration." People physically relocate from one country, and as noted earlier, to a second and often third country during this stage. Men leave their families with hopes of re-establishing a new life in another country before seeking reunification. Women often remain behind and take care of their children with limited resources (Young & Chan, 2015). People may also spend time in refugee camps waiting a decision about their future (i.e., whether they will be resettled to another country or sent back to their country of origin). Zaatari, the largest refugee camp in Jordan, was established as a temporary shelter by the United Nations shortly after violence in Syria erupted. But it has since become a permanent settlement of nearly 80,000 people (UNHCR, 2017). The living conditions in refugee camps are not much better than those in war-torn countries due to interethnic conflict, sexual violence, and disease (Adams, Gardiner, & Assefi, 2004).

Khawaja et al. (2008) evaluated resettlement experiences of refugees from Sudan in Australia. The challenges people encountered during this stage include an inability to access basic services, make sense of traumatic experiences, or accept life disruptions. Consistent with previous findings, people also reported more fear about the future during resettlement/migration than either pre-resettlement or post-resettlement/adjustment. George and Jettner (2016) examined migration experiences of refugees from Sri Lanka in Canada and India. They found similar stressors irrespective of destination country (i.e., unemployment and inadequate housing options, an absence of social support, and lack of

legal rights). This suggests that stressors may not be constant in this stage but shift over time depending on context. Moreover, it illustrates that refugees continued to experience challenges after leaving their country of origin. Although better understood than the previous stage of resettlement, this stage remains elusive in the literature.

Stage 3: Post-Resettlement/Adjustment

The third and final stage of resettlement is "post-resettlement/adjustment." During this stage people have reached their destination country and are applying for, or have already received, asylum. Despite being physically safe from violence, they continue to experience individual and relational challenges. Individual challenges include feeling socially isolated, uncertainty of identity, and low self-esteem. Relational challenges, on the other hand, include problems with intimacy and culture shock.

Individual Challenges

Social support, particularly during the second stage of resettlement, is a powerful determinant of overall wellbeing. While displacement is characterized by sudden departure and pervasive fear of uncertainty, it presents an opportunity to connect with others who share similar experiences. This can serve as a foundation for protective factors, such as resilience, during adjustment. Simich et al. (2003) examined the role of social support after resettlement among a diverse group of refugees (i.e., Bosnian, Croatian, Afghan, Kurd, Iraqi, Iranian, Sudanese, Kosovar, Algerian, Serbian, Sierra Leonean, and Somalian) in Canada. Although from different countries and with diverse persecution histories, all refugees shared a fear of being returned. This finding suggests that social support, operationalized as the source of emotional assistance, is vital to adaptation following arrival.

Understanding identity fragmentation after forced displacement and subsequent resettlement requires understanding refugee identity. People who abandon everything in fear of violence and persecution also abandon part of themselves. This includes their culture, language, and traditions. After reaching safety, they are left to make sense of the past and present. People suddenly find themselves in a different country with an unfamiliar language and customs while separated from friends and family. They begin comparing the past and present, which leads to frustration and exacerbates mental health problems. People also begin to identify with the "refugee" label.

Zetter (1991, 2007) explored the dynamic process of "refugee labeling" in a diverse group of African refugees (i.e., Burundian, Chadian, Ethiopian, Malawite, Sudanese, Tanzanian, and Zambian). In a comprehensive literature review spanning various destination countries, he argued that labeling is a political function used by governments to control people through stereotypes and conformity. Although necessary and important for public policy, this suggests that labeling gives rise to powerlessness and dependency by exploiting vulnerabilities in refugees.

Identity challenges and discrimination are additional risk factors that exacerbate displacement-related mental health problems during post-resettlement/adjustment. Smith and Silva (2011) also conducted a comprehensive literature review. They examined ethnic identity and wellbeing – specifically, the relationship between identity and mental health problems or symptoms – in a diverse refugee group resettled to the United States. Findings suggest a moderate relationship insofar as refugees are more susceptible to mental health problems or symptoms if they have a fragmented identity. Jasperse, Ward, and Jose (2011) explored the impact of perceived religious discrimination and mental

health among Muslim immigrants in New Zealand. Although not refugees, findings confirm that perceived discrimination – whether religious or ethnic – is associated with lower life satisfaction and higher mental problems (i.e., symptoms of anxiety and depression).

Relational Challenges

Intimate relationships are defined by an exchange of emotion (i.e., internal states of being), which traumatic experiences inhibit (Lawler & Thye, 2006). Evidence suggests that dysfunctional emotion regulation is a strong factor in being unable to form or maintaining interpersonal relationships (English, Simpson, & Campbell, 2013; Nickerson, Bryant, Schnyder, Schick, Mueller, & Morina, 2015). Refugees struggle with forming and maintain interpersonal relationships during the adjustment stage of resettlement (Hinton, Nickerson, & Bryant, 2011; Seligowski, Lee, Bardeen, & Orcutt, 2015). A person may experience conflicting emotions (e.g., anger or sadness) and attribute them to being forced from home. Another person may attribute their external presentation, without knowing their internal state of being, to loss of control. This creates a cycle of conflict that manifests as emotional separation and prevents relationship formation. The relational challenges or effects of displacement exacerbate existing vulnerabilities of mistrust (Raghallaigh, 2013; Manz, 1995).

Culture shock has been operationalized as difficulties that arise in response to a new environment (e.g., moving from a familiar to unfamiliar culture). During this stage, culture shock is a factor that contributes to whether refugees will adapt or acculturate (Phillimore, 2011). Although different outcomes are possible, depending on factors such as social support and community receptiveness, research has primarily focused on

adaptation and acculturation (Roblain, Malki, Azzi, & Licata, 2017). People may conform to the native language, such as English, and cultural values (i.e., assimilation). They may also accept the dominant culture while maintaining their own beliefs (i.e., acculturation). Keyes et al. (2004) examined the experience of Bosnian refugees living in the United States. They found that culture shock was not only common upon arrival but also accompanied by feelings of loneliness and low self-esteem. Acculturative stress among Iraqi refugees in the United States was examined by Yako and Biswas (2014). They also found that culture shock immediately upon arrival contributes to hopelessness and distress. This state of despair is not only exacerbated but also prolonged by uncertainty from navigating asylum in the United States.

United States Resettlement and Placement Program

To describe the USRAP as complex is an understatement. It is a collaborative effort between government agencies and non-governmental organizations that entails multiple interviews, background checks, and relatively extensive cross-referencing procedures that compare an asylum-seeker's narrative to other sources. The UNHCR acknowledges that this process is not only complex but also stringent and long (Ott, 2011). Therefore, less than 1% of refugees around the world qualify for resettlement to the United States (Pope, 2015). This "vetting process" may take between 12- and 24-months, often longer (USCIS; United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2015).

Processing Priorities

Most "asylum-seekers," which is what people are referred to before they are granted refugee status, self-identify to the UNHCR. The United States has three

processing priorities based on fear of persecution to identify refugees of special humanitarian concern (USCIS, 2016). Asylum-seekers directly referred by the UNHCR, United States Embassy, or designated non-governmental organization (NGO) are first priority. The second category are asylum-seekers identified by the USRAP. Family reunification is the third category (USCIS, 2016). The United Nations Refugee Agency performs an initial assessment by collecting demographic data (e.g., name, address, place of birth). Syrians are subject to collection of biometric data (e.g., iris scan). Interviews are scheduled with trained agents to confirm resettlement eligibility. The United Nations Refugee Agency refers eligible asylum-seekers to a RSC where their portfolio, which includes identifying documents and data related to security screenings, is assembled.

Security Screening Process

Compared to other groups, asylum-seekers are subject to an enhanced interagency security screening. This includes the National Counterterrorism Center and Intelligence Community (NCCIC), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and Department of State (DOS). Screenings evaluate whether an asylum-seeker is a national security risk by examining their connections to known enemies of the United States and any outstanding warrants or immigration-related violations. Syrians are also subject to an enhanced security screening by the Fraud Detection and National Security Directorate (FDNSD) of USCIS.

This process is repeated each time new information about the asylum-seeker emerges. After obtaining initial security clearance, the DHS schedules an interview. The interview is performed by a specially-trained USCIS officer. An additional biometric screening is performed and the asylum-seeker may be re-interviewed if new information

emerges. The applicant is then examined by a medical doctor for communicable diseases, whether they received vaccinations to prevent the spread of such diseases, the presence of physical or mental disorders associated with harmful behavior, and substance use disorders (CDC; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013). They may be provided with treatment immediately or denied admission due to medical reasons.

Placement

Asylum-seekers then complete a short cultural orientation training. An NGO based in the United States performs an assessment to determine the most appropriate resettlement location. Considerations for resettlement include their health and whether or not they have family in the United States. Applicants are continuously screened for security concerns and the process ends immediately if any doubts over risk to national security emerge. The International Organization for Migration (IOM), an inter-governmental organization (i.e., an organization that facilitates collaboration between two or more governments) affiliated with the United Nations, makes travel arrangements to the United States. An additional security screening is performed by United States Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) before being granted final approval.

Within their first year of arrival, asylum-seekers are required to apply for permanent residence (i.e., a green card). This process initiates additional security screenings with various local and federal government agencies. The RSC requests assistance from one of nine non-governmental agencies with 253 regional affiliates across the United States. During the first three months of resettlement, affiliates are

responsible for providing asylum-seekers with essential needs (e.g., housing, furnishings, clothing, food).

Issues with United States Resettlement Program

Issues concerning the USRAP are largely due to division of authority, concerns over funding, and security. Taken together, these concerns reflect shifting priorities. Division of authority and funding concerns reflect a continuously shifting process of resettlement. While security concerns increased after the coordinated terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 – as evidenced by the dissolution of Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) – they were not politicized until the most recent presidential election (Amos, 2016).

Division of Authority

The USRAP is complex because it involves numerous governmental agencies and non-profit organizations. As a result, it "has become the largest and most complex refugee resettlement program in the world. It consists of three federal agencies and their sub-components, yet no one is charged with coordinating this entity on a full-time basis, nor is there any forum in which the partners may address inter-agency operational or policy concerns" (HIAS, 2010). Similar concerns have been raised by the USCBP, as "breakdowns in coordination and information sharing on multiple levels have undermined the program" (Brown & Scribner, p. 103, 2014). An absence of oversight contributes to miscommunication between agencies and prevents their success. A report by the Congressional Research Services (CRS; Bruno, 2011) acknowledged that the broad challenge facing the refugee resettlement system is interagency information sharing

(i.e., information collected by foreign organizations, governmental and non-governmental alike, is not systematically shared with their counterparts in the United States).

Funding

Regional resettlement organizations are responsible for providing refugees with critical services upon their arrival to the United States. But without federal oversight, there are often funding discrepancies between states that impact service delivery. This concern has also been raised in a report by the CRS (Bruno, 2011), which states that allocating more funding to the ORR is critical to providing refugees with monthly cash assistance benefits, extending the current eight-month benefit period, improving access to employment services, and facilitating English language training.

Security

Despite a thorough vetting process, President Trump enacted an executive order (EO) effectively banning Muslims from entering the United States. *Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States* (Exec. Order No. 13769, 2017) has not only received widespread criticism around the world (Chmaytelli & Noueihed, 2017|), but was also blocked by the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit (9th Cir. 2017a). The block was upheld for the revised EO by both the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth (9th Cir. 2017b) Circuit and the Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit (4th Cir. 2017). The Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) subsequently allowed parts of the revised EO to take effect. Specifically, it permitted banning foreign nationals who lack any "bona fide relationship with any person or entity in the United States" (Donald J. Trump, President of the United States, et al. v. International Refugee Assistance Project, et al. and v. Hawaii, et al., 2017).

These EOs reflect considerable fear of refugee resettlement broadly and asylum-seekers from Syria specifically. In a letter to political leaders of the United States House and Senate, Florida Governor Rick Scott (Neiwert, 2015) remarked:

> "Following the terrorist attacks by ISIS in Paris that killed over 120 people and wounded more than 350, and the news that at least one of the terror attack suspects gained access to France by posing as a Syrian refugee, our state agency will not support the requests I have received."

Then presidential-candidate Donald Trump (Bump, 2016) also noted:

> "It's a big problem! We don't know anything about them. We don't know where they come from, who they are. There's no documentation. We have our incompetent government people letting 'em in by the thousands, and who knows, who knows, maybe it's ISIS."

Bloomberg Politics, a division of Bloomberg News, conducted a survey on whether the United States should continue to resettle Syrian refugees (Talev, 2015). Although consistent with widespread fear of terrorism, the findings were striking: 54% (n = 5,300) opposed Syrian refugee resettlement, 28% (n = 2,800) were comfortable with the existing screening process for refugees from Syria, and 11% (n = 1,100) favored only admitting Syrian refugees who were Christian.

The sentiment toward Christian refugees from Syria was a considerable point of contention in the Trump Administration's EO. During an interview with David Brody, White House Correspondent for the Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN), President Trump remarked (2017):

> "If you were a Muslim you could come in, but if you were a Christian, it was almost impossible and the reason that was so unfair, everybody was persecuted in all fairness, but they were chopping off the heads of everybody but more so the Christians. And I thought it was very, very unfair."

These EOs not only incited anti-refugee sentiment but also jeopardized national safety along with the United States' global standing (Benjamin, 2016).

Epistemological Approach and Theoretical Frameworks

This dissertation adds to the broader understanding of refugee R&P practices in the United States. The previous section outlined relevant literature about the resettlement process and discussed issues with the USRAP. This section describes my epistemological approach, which is important to the underlying theoretical framework of each aim and their respective methodologies.

Epistemological Approach

Epistemology (i.e., the source of knowledge) is a critical component of research because it refers to our orientation and understanding of knowledge in the world (Creswell, 2013; Slife & Williams, 1995). This view is influenced not only by my academic discipline but also my personal experiences. Indeed, Martens (2010) noted that engaging in self-reflection creates a dialogue that improves the validity of findings. I embrace the interpretive framework of social constructionism, the underlying assumptions of which are based on reality and knowledge.

Social constructionists believe that reality cannot be discovered because it does not exist independent of social interaction. In other words, people invent rather than discover reality (Kukla, 2000). This is an important assumption because it implies that reality, the subjective view of a phenomenon, cannot be discovered through research. Social constructionists also believe that knowledge is a product of social interaction and the environment (i.e., knowledge is the product of interaction between individuals and

their environment). Taken together, these assumptions reflect that reality is an ongoing and dynamic process.

This interpretive framework influences my approach to research in several ways. I do not believe that an objective and "discoverable" reality exists. Instead, I believe that reality is a social construct that depends on individual and context. The latter includes historical and cultural expectations (Creswell, 2013). Furthermore, I do not believe that my experience as a refugee is similar or even consistent with the experiences of other refugees. I applied this interpretive framework by asking refugees exploratory questions about their displacement from Syria and subsequent resettlement to the United States. Using a phenomenological approach, I made interpretations based on their backgrounds (i.e., personal, cultural, and historical) while positioning myself as a researcher (van Manen, 2007). I maintained a detailed reflexive journal while bracketing my experiences throughout interviews and data analysis. As the study of lived experiences, phenomenology has been used to bridge the gap between knowledge and reality (Wertz, 2005).

Theoretical Frameworks

In addition to describing my epistemological approach, it is important to describe the theoretical frameworks guiding each study. Since the USRAP consists of multiple levels and various collaborations, such as those between governmental agencies and NGOs, the first aim was informed by the theory of organizational readiness for change (Weiner, 2009). The second aim, on the other hand, was informed by the bioecological model (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006; Bronfenbrenner, 1995) and double ABC-X model of family stress and adaptation (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983a; 1983b).

Theory of Organizational Readiness for Change. This theory suggests that collective behavior is critical to implementing change and reaching a desired outcome (Weiner, 2009). Within an organization, such as the USRAP, readiness for change refers to the shared commitment to implementing change among affiliates and their ability to following-through. Readiness for change depends on how much members of USRAP value change. It also includes their appraisal of three key determinants (i.e., task demands, availability of resources, and contextual factors). A complex organizational change is easier when members perceive key determinants similarly. In contrast, organizational change is more difficult if members perceive key determinants differently.

Bioecological Model. Development of this theoretical framework can be divided into two distinct periods (Tudge, Mokrova, Hatfield, & Kamik, 2009). *Ecological systems theory* was developed in the first period (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This theory emphasized people's interaction with four distinct ecologies (i.e., microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem). Bronfenbrenner (1995) added a fifth ecology (i.e., chronosystem or time), while emphasizing how individual characteristics interact with the environment, in the second period. The reason for this change, according to Bronfenbrenner (1995), is because "the individual living organism whose biopsychological characteristics, both as a species and as individuals, have as much to do with their development as do the environments in which they live their lives" (p. 623).

The revised theory, which became known as the *bioecological model*, is based on two prepositions. The first preposition states that development is a reciprocal and increasingly complex process defined by interaction between an individual and his or her immediate environment. Similarly, the second preposition states that an individual's

biopsychological characteristics influence the interaction with his or her environment. This means that an individual is the center of his or her environment.

Bronfenbrenner (1995) also identified three personal characteristics that influence ecological processes: a) demand, b) resource, and c) force. *Demand characteristics* are readily visible. They include age, gender, and appearance. These characteristics are responsible for setting processes or interactions into motion. *Resources characteristics* are both visible and invisible. Visible characteristics include access to basic needs (e.g., food, housing, and employment). Invisible characteristics, on the other hand, include past experiences and intelligence. While *force characteristics* are not readily visible, their outcomes are. They include temperament, motivation, and persistence. In the context of challenges, such as those experienced by refugees across different stages of resettlement, development is a function of individual characteristics.

Addition of the chronosystem and emphasis on individual characteristics refined ecological systems theory through the process-person-context-time (PPCT) interaction, a foundational principle of the revised model (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). But it also led to misunderstanding and misapplication of its principles among scholars. Tudge, Mokrova, Hatfield, and Karnik (2009) evaluated several studies claiming to use ecological systems theory or the bioecological model in their research design. Three studies exclusively focused on the influence of context while neglecting individual characteristics. Seven studies addressed the influence of context and individual characteristics but not their interaction. Five studies attributed individual characteristics to context (i.e., unidirectional process).

These findings are important insofar as the incorrect application of theory is a threat to validity, and therefore, findings. Bronfenbrenner (1995) suggested that studies using the bioecological model discuss the interaction between ecological systems, including the individual and his or her context. The *microsystem* is closest to the person. It describes people and institutions (i.e., environment or context) that directly influence a person, such as family members and government officials. The interaction or relationship between people and their immediate context is described by the *mesosystem*. Similarly, the *exosystem* describes the relationship between the environment in which a person does not have an active role and their immediate context. To illustrate, a refugee may have a negative interaction with a customs officer (i.e., *microsystem*). The customs officer, however, interacts with the refugee negatively because he feels overwhelmed by unclear processing guidelines (i.e., *mesosystem*).

The *macrosystem* describes the culture and sociopolitical climate. This includes, but is not limited to, legal status and ethnicity. A refugee couple, their children, and government officials responsible for processing their asylum application are all components of the sociopolitical context. Santrock (2007) notes that the macrosystem evolves over time because each generation influences change. Specific environmental patterns, transitions, and sociohistorical events are described by the *chronosystem* (e.g., rise in anti-refugee sentiment following the presidential election). This ecology is particularly useful in understanding the experience of refugees navigating asylum in the United States because it is a chronological process (Lusting, 2010).

Double ABC-X Model of Family Stress and Adaptation. This model suggests that stress causes behavioral changes and contributes to problems in the family (Hill,

1949; 1958). While sources of stress may vary, they include human-made (e.g., armed conflict) and natural disasters (e.g., floods). An underlying assumption of this model is that people can learn to cope with crises. The ABC-X model was expanded to account for post-crisis variables (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983a). The double ABC-X model of family stress and adaptation describes how individuals and families achieve balance after a crisis. It views balance as the outcome of successful adaptation to a crisis at different levels (i.e., individual, family, and community). As an interdependent system, family members influence each other and are influenced by the community (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983a).

Within the model, "A" represents compounding demands that cause stress and lead to a crisis, such as violence and persecution during armed-conflict. Adaptive and coping mechanisms are represented by "B." They describe the necessary resources to overcome a crisis: a) individual (i.e., personal), b) family (i.e., internal), and c) social support. McCubbin and Patterson (1983b) suggest that "C," which represents meaning attributed to a crisis, is the most important component of adaptation. An individual or family unable to avoid stress, as is the case following resettlement to a third country, may nonetheless be able to redefine their situation.

Decrease in emotional intensity by means of perceived control over a situation facilitates coping. "X" represents an adaptation continuum that ranges from maladaptation to bonadaptation. "Maladaptation" is characterized by disintegration of family unity, developmental arrest of individuals, and more interdependence between members. "Bonadaptation," on the other hand, is defined by increased family unity, better

individual development, and perceived control over the situation (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983b).

Research Questions

The purpose of the first aim is to provide stakeholders in the United States R&P process with valuable information on the existing infrastructure. This information has not yet been systematically collected from USRAP organizations, at least in relation to the crisis in Syria, and would therefore be of considerable benefit to improving the infrastructure. An exploratory demographic and open-ended survey was designed related to the following research questions:

1) What are the characteristics of the USRAP?
2) What concerns and priorities do non-governmental organizations have about Syrian refugee resettlement efforts?
3) What perceived strengths, assets, limitations, and challenges do these organizations have about Syrian refugee resettlement efforts?
4) Do organizations, and by extension the resettlement program, have adequate support and resources to implement necessary changes?
5) What, if any, regional (i.e., Northeast, South, Midwest, and West) differences exist between organizations?

Formal hypotheses were not formulated for this aim in order to develop predictions for future research.

Offering clinicians (e.g., MFTs and other providers) who work with Syrian refugees a deeper understanding of their resettlement experiences was the purpose of the second aim. A qualitative semi-structured interview protocol was designed to gain a

personal perspective and narrative of the refugee resettlement experience related to the following research question:

1) What is the experience of Syrian refugees across each stage of resettlement?

Given the current refugee crisis and sociopolitical landscape, the goal of these aims was to bridge existing gaps in literature by providing a different perspective of the same phenomenon (i.e., resettlement efforts and experiences of Syrian refugees).

Conclusion

A brief literature review on the effects of displacement and resettlement was provided in this chapter. Studies were organized by widely-accepted stages of resettlement (i.e., pre-resettlement, resettlement/migration, and post-resettlement/ adjustment). Legal distinctions between key terms (i.e., "asylee," "asylum-seeker," "immigrant," and "refugee") were presented in the first stage of resettlement (i.e., pre-resettlement). This stage addressed common reasons people choose to leave their country of origin shortly before or immediately after conflict. The second stage of resettlement (i.e., resettlement/migration) further outlined reasons why people leave despite pervasive uncertainty while also addressing current conditions in the largest permanent settlement of displaced Syrians (i.e., Zaatari Refugee Camp in Jordan). An overview of common challenges people encounter after their arrival to their resettlement destination was presented in the third stage of resettlement (i.e., post-resettlement/ adjustment).

Common challenges were further detailed by context (i.e., individual or relational). This was followed by a comprehensive history of the USRAP, including its evolution from limited government oversight in the public sector to a public-private partnership with increasing restrictions. A presentation of the epistemological approach

(i.e., social constructionism) and theoretical frameworks (i.e., ecological systems theory, later known as the bioecological model, theory of organizational readiness for change, and the double ABC-X model of family stress and adaptation) used is followed by an outline of research questions guiding each aim. The next chapter outlines the methodology used in each study, including a description of participants and the research team, and data analysis procedure. The process used to establish trustworthiness for the second study is also described.

Chapter 3: Methodology

> *For a start, people who traveled for so many miles through such horrific conditions in order to find work cannot accurately be portrayed as lazy benefit-scroungers.*
>
> *Patrick Kingsley*
> Foreign Correspondent
> New York Times

This chapter presents the research methodology of each aim. For the second aim, participant narratives and investigator (i.e., research team) biographies are also presented. The former includes a short profile of each participant and unique or important aspects of their resettlement experience. Brief biographies of the research teams are presented in the latter. My biography is considerably longer than the others because I was primarily collecting and interpreting data.

First Aim: Nationwide Survey of Resettlement Affiliates

Research Design

The first aim entailed survey data collection of quantitative demographic information. It also included open-ended questions for elaboration of answers across five domains (i.e., knowledge of efforts, leadership, climate, knowledge about issue, and resources for efforts). Data collection began after approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Minnesota was obtained. The PRM directory of resettlement affiliates was entered into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet (i.e., organization's name, voluntary affiliate association, and resettlement director's contact information). This spreadsheet was later reviewed and updated after a reverse search of each organization and their resettlement director's contact information. Despite being updated every month, the PRM directory of resettlement affiliates was inaccurate (e.g., it listed

organizations that were no longer operating and incorrect contact information). This spreadsheet was updated twice with numerous changes made each time. It was also used to track survey distribution, including the number of surveys started, completed, and undeliverable invitations.

Procedure

Questions from the Community Readiness Model (CRM; Oetting, Plested, Edwards, Thurman, Kelly, & Beauvais, 2014) were adapted for use with an online survey platform (see Appendix A). Although the CRM was not developed for use as an online survey, platforms like Qualtrics (Snow, 2015) present several advantages over other delivery methods (e.g., paper and pencil surveys). Collection of different response types, ranging from descriptive text and graphic to multiple choice and matrix table, is a valuable advantage because some CRM questions are response-dependent (i.e., preceding questions depend on previous answers). Another advantage is that Qualtrics meets stringent University of Minnesota privacy and confidentiality procedure guidelines unavailable in traditional surveys. An online survey platform also enables collection of both quantitative and open-ended data by evaluating each of the five CRM-specific dimensions: a) knowledge of efforts, b) leadership, c) climate, d) knowledge about issue, and e) resources for efforts Participants could skip questions they felt uncomfortable answering or respond with, “Prefer Not to Answer.”

Knowledge of efforts. This dimension, which consists of 11 questions, assessed current community (i.e., town or city) efforts that address resettlement of Syrian refugees. A sample question is, “Are there efforts in your community to address problems related to the refugee resettlement process?”

Leadership. This dimension, which consists of seven questions, assessed how leadership in the community perceives the resettlement of Syrian refugees. "Leadership" was defined as "those who could affect the outcome of refugee resettlement and have influence in the community and/or who lead the community in helping it achieve its goal." Participants were offered four types of community leaders for consideration: a) official leaders, b) civil leaders, c) catalysis, and 4) connectors (Harwood Institute, 2003).

"Official leaders" are elected officials that tend to focus on the formal business of a community (e.g., policy decisions and economic development). "Civil leaders," on the other hand, represent the interests of a particular group in the community (e.g., clergy). "Catalysts" often do not have official titles but represent their community and have considerable insight into issues of concern (e.g., elders). "Connectors" move between organizations and spread ideas (e.g., organizers of grassroots movements). Participants could also respond with "Other" and enter a leadership type. A sample question is, "On a scale from 1-10, how much of a concern is refugee resettlement to leadership in your community with 1 being *no concern at all* and 10 being *a very great concern*?"

Climate. This dimension, which consists of eight questions, assessed what community members believe about the importance of resettlement of Syrian refugees. A sample question is, "How much of a priority is addressing refugee resettlement to members of your community?"

Knowledge about issue. This dimension, which consists of four questions, assessed how much members of the community know about resettlement efforts of Syrian refugees. A sample question is, "On a scale from 1-10, how much do members of your

community know about refugee resettlement, with 1 being *no knowledge* and 10 being *detailed knowledge*?"

Resources for efforts. This dimension, which consists of eight questions, assessed efforts that address Syrian refugee resettlement. A sample question is, "How are current efforts related to refugee resettlement funded and is this funded likely to continue into the future?"

Organizational readiness. Organizational readiness to facilitate the resettlement of Syrian refugees was assessed by a single question, "How prepared is your organization to facilitate the resettlement of Syrian refugees?" The response was measured on a scale from 1-5 with 1 being *extremely unprepared* and 5 being *extremely prepared*. This question was specifically developed for this study to assess organizational readiness in the resettlement of Syrian refugees.

Demographic information. A set of questions were developed to capture basic demographic information about each participant and their leadership role in the non-governmental organization. Qualtrics Mailer was used to track survey distribution statistics (i.e., number of surveys started, finished, and undeliverable e-mails). Although responses were confidential, insofar as it did not identify participants or their respective organizations, the survey link enabled participants to save and resume their response. The copyright for images and graphics used in each solicitation e-mail was purchased by the principal investigator (PI).

The first e-mail was sent to 224 organizations (see Appendix B), which yielded 12 responses and 11 undeliverable messages. Undeliverable messages were reviewed for accuracy, compared to the PRM directory, and updated in the spreadsheet. The second e-

mail was sent to 212 organizations that did not respond to the first e-mail or failed to complete the survey (see Appendix C). This yielded 14 responses and 11 undeliverable messages. Messages were reviewed again for accuracy, compared them to the PRM directory, and updated in the spreadsheet. Similarly, the third e-mail was sent to 198 organizations that did not respond to the second e-mail or failed to complete the survey. This yielded 4 responses and 6 undeliverable messages (see Appendix D).

The third solicitation message prompted a response from Melanie Nezer, senior vice president of public affairs at HIAS. Ms. Nezer expressed concern about solicitations being; at least from the subject line (e.g., "Refugee Resettlement: Underfunded, Overstretched, and Failing"), from an anti-refugee resettlement group (see Appendix E). She requested a telephone conversation to provide additional rationale for the survey. After the conversation, Ms. Nezer offered to distribute the fourth and final solicitation e-mail to the remaining 169 organizations (see Appendix F). This yielded 12 additional responses, 3 completed surveys, and 2 undeliverable messages. Of 224 organizations invited to participate, 74 surveys were started (i.e., 33% response rate). This response rate is consistent with online survey research (Bartel Sheehan, 2001; Miller & Dillman, 2011; Sauermann & Roach, 2013).

Participants

Participants identified primarily as White (*n* = 49, 65.3%) women (*n* = 44, 58.7%) with a bachelor's (*n* = 16, 21.3%) or master's (*n* = 27, 36%) degree. Their leadership positions ranged from chief operating officer (COO) and chief program officer (CPO) to director of refugee services and office coordinator. Nearly half the participants were born in the United States (n = 31, 41.3%) and over half identified English as their primary

language (*n* = 42, 56%; see Table 1). Most organizations were affiliated with the USCCB (*n* = 24, 32%) followed by LIRS (*n* = 13, 17.3%) and USCRI (*n* = 10, 13.3%; see Table 2). It is important to note, however, that organizations could be affiliated with more than one voluntary agency (VOLAG). The South was represented the most (*n* = 25, 33.3%) followed by the Northeast (*n* = 22, 29.3%), Midwest (*n* = 18, 24%), and West (*n* = 9, 12%). Organizations collectively resettled 224,491 refugees – including 7,366 Syrians – between 2013 and 2016 (WRAPS; Worldwide Refugee Admissions Processing System, 2017). This is 76% of the total refugees, and 44% of Syrians, resettled to the United States during that period (see Table 3).

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using a descriptive approach for quantitative data and thematic approach for open-ended responses. Frequencies and distributions were explored in IBM SPSS, Statistics, Version 24 (2015). Missing data did not exceed 20% in any region of the United States. This suggests that data were missing not at random (MNAR). There are several possible reasons for this. The survey was long and participants may have gotten tired. Also, the survey was about resettlement efforts of Syrian refugees. Participants who did not complete the survey, or only completed the demographic questions, were from the Rust Belt (i.e., region of the United States that extends from the Great Lakes to the Midwest). This region either resettled a limited number of Syrian refugees, as discussed later, resettled none.

Qualitative data (i.e., open-ended responses) were then analyzed using a six-step thematic analysis method (Braun & Clarke, 2006): a) gaining familiarity with the data, b) generating initial codes, c) searching for themes, d) reviewing themes, e) defining and

naming previously identified themes, and f) writing the report. Each response was broken down into conceptual components. Examples of concepts were identified, selected, and linked to more substantive concepts or ideas. Both processes were repeated for each dimension and through theory development. Emerging themes were developed through ongoing comparison and linked to form dominant themes or sub-themes (Bernard, Wutich, & Ryan, 2017). This process was tracked in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet (see Appendix G).

Second Aim: Resettlement Experience of Syrian Refugees

Research Design

The second aim entailed data collection of qualitative semi-structured interviews across three stages of resettlement (i.e., pre-resettlement, resettlement/migration, and post-resettlement/adjustment). Data collection began after approval from the IRB was obtained. A critical part of sample selection and participant recruitment was ensuring that everyone experienced the same phenomenon (Creswell & Miller, 2010). Participants therefore had to meet the following inclusion criteria: a) fled from violence and persecution in Syria, b) resettled to the United States within the last three years (i.e., 2013-2016), c) had any legal status except citizenship, d) were the age of majority (i.e., 18 years of age) or older, and e) endorsed no more than two statements at *sometimes* or *often* on the Brief Refugee Mental Health Screener.

Procedure

After obtaining informed consent in both English (see Appendix H) and Arabic (see Appendix I), participants were screened for psychological distress using the Brief Refugee Mental Health Screener (see Appendix J). Sociodemographic information was

obtained from participants before asking them three grand tour questions (see Appendix K):

1) I would like to begin by asking you to share a little about what your life was like in Syria, or another country, before coming to the United States? What can you tell me about your life before?
2) I would like to know more about your journey to the United States. How would you describe your journey?
3) How would you describe life for you and your family since coming to the United States?

While each grand tour question was followed-up with more specific questions as appropriate, interviews became natural conversations as to evoke authenticity (Grbich, 2013). This required patience and understanding because refugees are drawn to sharing their experiences even if inconsistent with the questions being asked (Sigona, 2014).

Interviews lasted between 45-150 minutes and were recorded using the TASCAM DR-05 digital recorder. Participants received a $25 Wal-Mart gift card for completing the interview. Before being destroyed, scanned documents and audio files were remotely uploaded to a secure server at the University of Minnesota using a virtual private network (VPN). The adaptive noise reduction feature of Adobe Audition CC 2017 (Adobe Systems, 2016) was used to remove background noise from each interview and amplify voices. Interviews were transcribed as soon as possible using Audacity 2.1.2 (Audacity Team, 2016). De-identified transcripts were password protected and also stored remotely at the University of Minnesota using the VPN.

Participants and their Narratives

Participants were recruited in-person using availability and snowball sampling techniques in Minnesota and Texas. An interpreter/cultural broker, which is discussed in more detail later, active in the communities reach out to elders who identified interested participants. These participants were screened for the inclusion criteria and psychological distress. The sample consisted of 12 refugees (n = 8 men, n = 4 women) from Syria between 20 and 52 years of age (M = 35.8, SD = 10.7), men were a mean age of 37.6 years (SD = 10.5) and women were a mean age of 30.3 years (SD = 10.6). Participants reported spending time with others who share – in addition to accessing information about – their culture, ethnic group, language, or religion (N = 12).

Similarly, nearly all participants (n = 9) attended celebrations or events of their culture, ethnic group, language or religion (see Table 4). Most participants fled from Syria in 2013 (M = 2013, range = 2010-2016) and arrived (i.e., were resettled) to the United States in 2016 (M = 2015, range = 2013-2016; see Table 5). The purpose of qualitative research is to understand the experience of a phenomenon rather than generalize information (van Mannen, 1997). Therefore, enough information was gathered from participants to reach theoretical saturation (i.e., understand their experience of the phenomenon). This ranges between 5 and 25 participants (Polkinghorne, 1989).

van Manen (1990) notes that "parts" (i.e., participant narratives) are vital to understanding the "whole" (i.e., resettlement experience). Their narratives contextualize data analysis and situate participants in relation to each other. Given the sociopolitical climate around refugee resettlement, particularly as it applies to Syrians, the confidentiality of participants was preserved according to the AAMFT (2015) and

American Psychological Association (APA, 2016) ethical guidelines. Participants' names are fictional and other identifying information (e.g., locations and specific events) was changed as necessary. However, descriptions of their underlying experiences have not been changed. Narratives are presented as short vignettes that outline circumstances of their displacement from Syria and subsequent resettlement to the United States.

Rifat Aswad. A 34-year-old single man who lived in Damascus with his parents and older brother. Rifat studied engineering at the University of Damascus before serving two years of compulsory military service in the Syrian Army. He completed his service but went to work for his father, who owned a construction company, instead of returning to college. Rifat enjoyed working for his father and was looking forward to expanding their business when violence erupted and forced him to abandon everything. He left Syria in 2013, living in Jordan and Lebanon for one year, before coming to the United States mid-2014. Although Rifat had considerable financial resources upon arrival, he invested the majority into a small used car dealership. He is grateful to be in the United States despite overwhelming resettlement challenges upon arrival. "When I came here, I felt like I regretted it. I said, 'Why did I come to America?' With all the negative things that happened?" he explained. "I wish I stayed in Lebanon."

Marwan Rahal. A 32-year-old single man who lived in Aleppo, the largest city in Syria after Damascus, with his parents and siblings. Marwan graduated from the Jareer School for Boys and was hoping to study computer science in college. He was also working for his family-owned construction company. Marwan left Syria in 2014, living in Turkey, Jordan, and Lebanon during which he returned to Syria, before coming to the United States two years later (i.e., 2016). He currently lives with a wealthy family he met

in Lebanon, while they were on vacation, who sponsored his visa application to the United States. Although essentially strangers, this family treats him like their child. "They love me like their son," Marwan explained. He works full-time as a cashier at a carwash and as a security guard at this family's franchise car dealership. "Saturday and Sunday, I work 24-hours. Twelve hours at the carwash and then I go to the dealership."

Mohammad Said. A 65-year-old married man with seven children (i.e., four girls and three boys) who lived in al-Hasakah, where Hasan Ali Akleh set himself on fire in protest of the al-Assad Regime in 2011, before coming to the United States. Mohammad does not have a formal education and worked as a driller in an oil field before becoming a wheat farmer. He left Syria in 2013 and lived in Turkey for two years, seeking medical treatment for his youngest daughter, before coming to the United States mid-2016. The family was resettled into two apartments per local housing code following arrival. Mohammad lives in an apartment with his wife and youngest children while their oldest son lives in another apartment nearby with the other children. Because he is unemployed and relies on his three children for income, being able to pay rent for two apartments after resettlement assistance ends has been a considerable source of fear and anxiety.

Maan Ganim. A 45-year-old married man with three daughters lived with his immediate and extended family in Aleppo. Maan inherited a barbershop from his father when he was 15-years-old and married his current wife shortly thereafter. They left Syria in 2014 and lived in Jordan for over two years before coming to the United States mid-2016. Maan never imagined coming and hoped to return to Syria while in Jordan. "We rented a house in Jordan because we promised ourselves, 'next month we will go back to Syria'." He currently lives with his wife and children in a three-bedroom apartment.

While they were initially separated into two apartments, per local ordinance, Maan advocated for their rights. “I came to the United States to be together and not separated,” he explained. “If this is the law, I will go back to Syria.” Maan currently works full-time as a taxi driver.

Alaa Said. A 20-year-old single man who attended Sarhildan High School and lived with his family (i.e., parents and six siblings) before coming to the United States. Mathematics was Alaa’s favorite subject in school and he was looking forward to college before being displaced. Being the second-oldest male, he currently works full-time in a Syrian bakery and is unable to pursue higher education. Alaa lives in a separate apartment, although only around the block from his parents, with three siblings (i.e., two boys and one girl).

Joram Bitar. A 32-year-old married man with four children, two boys and two girls. Joram left Syria in 2013, living in the Zaatari Camp and Daraa for one month, before returning to Syria. He lived in Syria for another two years before coming to the United States late-2016. Joram worked full-time as a taxi driver and construction supervisor in the Kafersouseh suburb of Damascus where 44 people died and 166 were injured in after government-sanctioned violence against protestors in late-2012. He described his life before the violence as simple, stable, and safe. “I used to go out to restaurants and cafés until two o’clock in the morning.” Joram currently works full-time as a taxi driver while seeking medical treatment for his youngest daughter’s severe and debilitating genetic disorder.

Ahmed Shamon. A 52-year-old married man with five children, four girls and one boy. Ahmed arrived in the United States early-2013 and almost immediately began

working towards family reunification. He described his first few months in the United States as very difficult because he could not stop thinking about the past. “In the very beginning, I remembered a lot. I could not forget, you cannot forget. You do not forget. No, not at all. Absolutely not.” Ahmed lived in Damascus, working part-time as an athletic coach and manufacturing supervisor, before coming to the United States. He was alone for almost three years while his wife and three children lived in Egypt and Turkey; two children were ineligible for family reunification because of their marriage, and thus, lived in Syria. Ahmed currently works part-time in a distribution warehouse and described his life in Syria as stable before everything changed.

Rasha Haik. A 27-year-old single woman who speaks nearly fluent English and attends law school in the United States. Rasha grew up with her parents and five siblings (i.e., three sisters and two brothers) in a small town. She moved to Damascus for law school after completing her upper secondary education (i.e., high school equivalent in the United States). Rasha became politically active by criticizing government oppression after learning about the influence of Islam on personal and family law.

She was not concerned about the situation in Syria until protests erupted in response to children in Daraa, five miles from the Jordanian border, who spray painted “It is your turn, Doctor Bashar al-Assad” on the wall of their school. “The Arab Spring started in Tunisia and spread from there,” Rasha explained. “But I never thought that it would happen in Syria. I really never thought that it would happen in Syria.” She came to the United States mid-2013 on a tourist visa (i.e., B-1) to visit her older brother who was completing his medical residency training. She was supposed to leave the following month but feared being targeted because of her political activism. Rasha adjusted her

status from a tourist to a student (i.e., F-1) and eventually temporary protected status (TPS). She anticipates graduating from law school and advocating for other refugees, much like herself, in the United States and becoming a citizen. The latter, however, is uncertain.

Firas Harb. A 32-year-old recently divorced man with two children, one girl and one boy. Firas lived in Damascus before coming to the United States. He began working with his father, who owned a construction company, after graduating from high school. Firas continued working with his father for two years after high school before opening his own company with a paternal cousin. He married his ex-wife shortly thereafter and they had a child. Firas tried to avoid compulsory military service by working for his father's friend in Dubai, but returned to Syria in fear of retribution for reporting an employee theft.

He served two years in the Syrian Army as a driver, which would become useful later in the United States, and had another child. "I paid more attention to my job, which was very good, and went out with my friends," he explained. Firas came to the United States late-2014, shortly after his wife divorced him, with his younger brother and mother on a tourist visa (i.e., B-2). He applied for asylum immediately upon arrival and is in the process of filing for family reunification with his children and older sisters. Firas currently works full-time as a taxi driver.

Nooda Tuma. A 45-year-old married woman with five children, three girls and two boys, from Damascus (i.e., Damascus City Center). Nooda lived with her husband and five children – two of whom married and moved in with their husbands – before coming to the United States mid-2016. "I remember how we were living, how I raised

five children. We educated them and two of them have gotten university degrees, one in business administration and the other in computer engineering." With a relatively high income, she did not have to work outside of the home. The family also went frequently on vacation and spent time with grandparents. As the Arab Spring swept across Egypt and Tunisia, toppling each respective government, Nooda never thought that it would reach Syria. She soon realized that they had to leave before it became worse. "There was no electricity or water and there would be three or four days without either," she explained. "And it would only come back for two or three hours." Before coming to the United States, which would happen almost two years after her husband left, Nooda lived in Egypt and Turkey with their children.

Asil Wasem. A 29-year-old married woman with three children, two girls and one boy, who lived in Damascus before coming to the United States mid-2016. Asil was a homemaker, taking care of a physically disabled child, while her husband owned and drove a taxi. She described her life in Syria as nice and simple despite only one source of income. "Our life was simple and normal. We were not, you know, of a high socio-economic status. And really, honestly, it was a nice life."

Asil lived close to her parents and siblings (i.e., three brothes and two sisters) and frequently visited them while her husband was working. She never anticipated, or imagined for that matter, that the Arab Spring would reach Syria. Asil also never imagined being displaced and seeking asylum in the United States. "I honestly never imagined that I would come to the United States without having an idea." She is grateful for the opportunity to rebuild her life in the United States, and obtain medical treatment for their son, but blames herself for leaving her family scattered across the Middle East.

Mais Deeb. A 20-year-old single woman who speaks nearly fluent English and studies pre-medicine at a local community college while working full-time. Although an adolescent at the time, Mais described her life in Syria as stable and relatively carefree. She lived with her parents and siblings; half-brother and sister, in the historic Kurdish Quarter of Damascus (i.e., Rakn- al-Din). They had an above-average income because her father worked in an unspecified sector of international business. Mais graduated from middle school, was preparing for high school, and she was looking forward to college. "I used to have a really normal life," she explained, "I was starting to make my decision about what kind of schools I want to go to and what I want to study at university." She left Syria with her mother and siblings nearly three years ago in early-2013, living in Egypt and Turkey for three years, before being approved for family reunification and joining her father in the United States early-2016.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using a six-step phenomenological approach outlined by van Manen (1997; see Appendix L). This approach facilitates interpretation of lived experiences by "...discovering what lies at the ontological core of our being" (van Manen, 1984, p. 39). As an ongoing iterative process, coding units then themes began to emerge within each chronological resettlement period. Both methods were tracked in spreadsheets (see Appendix M).

Analytic approach. The first step was *turning to the nature of lived experience* (van Manen, 1997). It emphasizes that the PIs previous experiences influence all phases of research. I therefore maintained a reflexive journal throughout data collection to "...externalize what in some sense is internal" (van Manen, 1997, p.125). This journal

was an invaluable reminder of my thought process and its evolution over time (see Appendix N). I also introduced my background and encouraged the interpreter/cultural consultant to briefly introduce his.

This provided considerable insight into my motivation to better understand the resettlement experience of Syrian refugees in the United States. For the second step, *investigating experience as it is lived rather than as it is conceptualized,* van Manen (1990) argued that lived experiences should be "investigated" rather than "learned" about. The former consists of obtaining first-person accounts whereas the latter entails reading books or journal articles. While I interviewed Syrian refugees in the United States about their resettlement experience, I also reviewed secondary sources (e.g., peer-refereed journal articles, books, and reliable websites). This facilitated my understanding of the phenomenon and guided the data analysis.

The third step was *reflecting on the essential themes which characterize the phenomenon* (van Manen, 1997). This step emphasizes capturing the essential meaning (i.e., essence) of the phenomenon by reflecting on previously identified themes. Drawing a "...distinction between appearance and essence, between the things of our experience and that which grounds the things of our experience" (van Manen, 1997, p. 32), leads to clarity. I achieved this by noting emerging themes immediately after each interview. Reflexive notes were helpful not only during data analysis but they also influenced the direction of subsequent interviews. *Describing the phenomenon in the art of writing and re-writing* was the fourth step (van Manen, 1990). This was a critical because it further clarifies the feelings, thoughts, and attitudes of participants. Reading and re-reading, in

addition to writing and re-writing, helped me gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon.

The fifth step, *maintaining a strong and orientated relation to the phenomenon* (van Manen, 1990), argues that the PI "…cannot afford to adopt an attitude of so-called scientific disinterestedness" (van Manen, 1997, p. 33). The PI must therefore remain focused on the research question and avoid distractions. I maintained regular contact with my advisor, Dr. Elizabeth Wieling over e-mail and weekly meetings. The sixth step was *balancing the research context by considering the parts and the whole* (van Mannen, 1997). This step suggests that each interview is independent of others but also part of the whole. I read each transcript several times to become familiar with the underlying meaning. I then tried to place the thematic analysis into context by mapping the findings onto the bioecological model.

Theme identification. Although van Manen (1997) proposed three methods of abstraction to identifying themes (i.e., detailed reading, selective reading, and holistic reading), I primarily used the latter two. I tried identifying the phenomena most revealing statement by asking myself, "What statement(s) or phrase(s) seem particularly essential or revealing about the phenomenon or experience being described?" for the second approach (van Manen, 1997, p. 93). For the third approach, I tried to capture the underlying meaning of each transcript by asking myself, "What sententious (i.e., critical) phrase may capture the fundamental meaning or main significance of the text as a whole?" (van Manen, 1997, p. 93).

Research Team

Since phenomenology is the study of experiences, it is important to discuss how my experiences influenced both emic and etic perspectives. The research team's personal biographies may also provide insight into the experience of participants (van Manen, 1984). The goal is to provide direct descriptions without offering causal explanations or generalizations. In seeking to understand the experiences of Syrians navigating asylum in the United States, I provide an account of being displaced from the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, fleeing to Germany, and navigating asylum in the United States. A detailed account of my experience writing this dissertation, with a focus on the second aim, is available elsewhere (Utrzan, in press).

Damir Utrzan

I was born in Novi Grad, formerly known as Bosanski Novi, in what is now Bosnia and Herzegovina (see Figure 11). My mother, Ermina Utrzan (née Veletanlic), was in her late twenties working as an administrative assistant. My father, Drasko Utrzan, was in his early thirties working as a construction supervisor with his father. They lived in a two-story house with my paternal grandparents, Stevan and Mileva (née Krneta) Utrzan; my middle name is my paternal grandfather's first name. As new parents with promising careers, their lives were not only satisfying but also picturesque. But everything changed the following year.

The Yugoslav revolutionary Josip Broz Tito unified a fractured and multicultural country. Ten years after his death, when I was 12-months-old, disagreement over distribution of power emerged between delegates in the national congress. The Serbian delegation was in favor of a one-person, one-vote policy whereas the Slovenian and

Croatian delegations favored increased votes for republics. This led to dissolution of communism and hostility over sovereignty. Shortly thereafter, Croatian leadership attempted to replace law enforcement officials in a Serb populated region. This catalyzed a series of events, such as the residence between civilians and heavily militarized law enforcement officers, that marked the beginning of a violent conflict.

As an interethnic couple, my parents never experienced prejudice or preferential treatment. But tension became noticeable after the fall of socialism. To make matters worse, my father was conscribed into the Serbian military that controlled Bosanski Novi. This was a decisive moment in their relationship because the marriage between a Bosnian Muslim and Orthodox Christian Serb increased risks of persecution. My father recognized the danger my mother and I were in and sent us to live with her brother, Velid Veletanlic, in Germany. “I had no other choice but to send you to safety,” he later explained. “The only alternative was death.” We boarded a tour bus as I waved goodbye to my father.

I looked out of the window at the countryside as the bus slowed down and eventually stopped at a military checkpoint. An armed guard with a long beard, who I now recognize as Serbian military, entered the bus. He looked at all the passengers with what looked like distrust, but never said a word. The handle of his automatic rifle hung over his right shoulder by a dark green strap and brushed against the headrest of my mother’s seat. I was quiet. Years later my mother shared her fear of me accidentally saying that we were fleeing, “I prayed that you would stay quiet. You were just a child and had no idea what was happening.” The consequences would have been disastrous not

only for us, but also my father. The guard left and I continued to look out of the window at the countryside as if nothing happened.

We crossed the border into Germany several hours later. I woke up an exclaimed that "The power came back on!" This innocent remark captures my misunderstanding of what occurred over the previous several months. We lived with my uncle and his family, wife and two daughters, for several months. I did not speak the language and was unable to make friends. My mother was heartbroken. She did not know about my father's whereabouts or if he was still alive. This lasted several months before it became intolerable. My mother saved enough money working without authorization at a restaurant and decided, despite my uncle's pleading, that we should return to Bosanski Novi. We boarded a tour bus again as I waved goodbye to my uncle. I looked out of the window at the countryside eager to see my father. The bus never slowed down or stopped. We crossed the border into what was Serbia, and several years later, became Bosnia and Herzegovina.

My father eagerly waited for us at the bus stop. I did not immediately recognize him because he wore a camouflage military uniform; a Serbian crest patch on his left shoulder and a beret on his head. The crest depicted a two-headed eagle holding a crown with its talons against the background of the Serbian flag. My parents secretly hoped to resume their lives. But the money my mother saved only lasted a few months and the violence not only intensified but primarily targeted Bosnian Muslims. My mother lost her job as an administrative assistant due to "budget cuts," which she knew was due to her ethnic identity. A friend from my father's military detachment pulled him aside and said, "You cannot live in this neighborhood with a Bosnian Muslim, you need to leave."

My father's uncle, the late Milojko Utrzan, drove us across the border into a Serb-controlled province of Bosnia and Herzegovina. My parents only had enough money to rent a small apartment. But this apartment was near a sewer and infested with rats. I could hear them crawling around during the day. They would come out of their holes at night and climb the curtains. I was unable to sleep. We lived in this apartment for several months before my parents accepted the prospect of no future in the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

Again, my mother and I boarded a tour bus headed to Germany. My father was forced to remain behind in fear of being apprehended for desertion, court martialed, and sent back to the frontline awaiting certain death. My mother and I arrived in Germany and returned to live with her brother and his family. We lived with them for several months until my father could make an arrangement with the organized crime syndicate to smuggle him into Germany. Years later my father remarked, "I no other option and was ready to die if caught." He safely arrived in Germany and we tried to resume our lives as if nothing ever happened. But a lot happened.

I learned to speak German and made a few friends. Other children bullied me in kindergarten, though, because I wore clothing from the Red Cross. We had little financial resources and relied on government assistance. My father was unauthorized to work, which relegated my mother to work long hours in a restaurant earning under 20,000 Deutsche Mark (DM) annually. This is the equivalent of under 12,000 United States Dollars (USD) in 1995 (United Nations Treasury, 2017).

I continued to be bullied by children in elementary school and felt isolated. The parents of friends I made were hesitant and afraid of asylum-seekers. I looked forward to

secondary school, which in Germany is organized by tiers. The first tier is “gymnasium.” It ranked highest and focuses on preparation for advanced academic studies, such as college. The second tier is “realschule.” It focuses on preparation for an apprenticeship. The third tier, known as “hauptschule,” is ranked the lowest and focuses on vocational training. I was not considered prepared for advanced academic studies and enrolled in hauptschule. Although difficult, I accepted my academic inaptitude and began to orient towards a vocation. This was the beginning of my desire to obtain an advanced education.

We began preparing for the screening process into the United States. Neither of my parents were literate or could speak German, so I spent countless days and nights with them writing out our narrative. The initial assessment was performed remotely. It consistent of collecting biometric data and scheduling an interview. This would be the first interview of many. We were lucky and given preference for resettlement as a family. Others were not as lucky and were sent back to a country ravaged by violence and corruption. Another assessment was performed and more biometric data collected. But this time we met with a panel of representatives from the United States government. They asked us questions related to the narrative submitted. After several security checks by the NCC, FBI, former INS, and the DOS, we were given clearance for resettlement. My parents completed cultural orientation and began selling the belongings we had. I was disappointed that I could not bring a videogame console with me. We left the airport in the morning and were driven by my mother’s friend. We said goodbye and entered the airport.

The captain turned on the “fasten your seatbelt” sign and began descending. The flight attendants walked to their seats on the ends of the airplane. Applause spontaneously

erupted when the wheels touched down on the tarmac at Chicago O'Hare International Airport. This was a chartered flight by the government to resettle refugees. I walked down the aisle toward the jet bridge when the flight attendant stopped me and said that "The captain would like to see you." I only understood "captain." But I was excited to see the cockpit of an airplane. The captain smiled at me and leaned over. I did not understand much. He handed me a torn piece of paper while smiling; it was the flight's route map.

I was mesmerized by the moving sidewalk, which I had never seen before. The international flags that hung from the ceiling were welcoming. I thought to myself, "This is just like on the television." We had never been in an airport, and neither one of us spoke or read English, so it took a lot of effort to find the baggage claim. Instead of being welcomed by a representative from the resettlement organization, which is otherwise standard procedure, we were instructed over mail before departing Germany to board a motor coach. I was fascinated by everything as we waited on the curb outside the terminal. The taxi cabs were yellow and police cruisers were white with blue lights. The expectations we had of our house was based on television portrayals. We arrived in the United States with nothing but four suitcases and a "Reception and Placement Assurance Form" (see Figure 12).

Expectations were shattered almost instantaneously when we arrived at our apartment. It was a red multi-family complex in an impoverished and otherwise neglected residential area. There was a lot of crime in the neighborhood as evidence by blaring sirens of police cruisers and seemingly daily raids of neighboring homes. There was no food in the refrigerator, culturally-appropriate or otherwise, and the stained furniture

permeated a musty odor. The television was small, no more than 20-inches in diameter, black and white with two bent antennas in the back.

The window lock did not work, so my father wedged a broom handle into the sliding groves to keep it from being opened. That night I heard tapping on the window. My parents dismissed it as tree branches swaying in the wind but then heard it themselves. Against my father's pleading, I went to the window and moved the tattered curtain to look out of our first-story apartment. The noise my parents had dismissed as tree branches was a homeless woman acting erratically. Years later my mother shared her regret and fears with me, "I did not believe what I was seeing with my eyes. I had so much regret. This was not the United States portrayed on television."

The local organization assigned us a native-speaking case worker. But the relationship he had with us was unprofessional. My father would give him money, often 20 USD but sometimes more, to help us get groceries or complete paperwork for government assistance. We lived in that apartment for six months before moving to a different complex in a largely native-speaking community. I refer to the community as native rather than Bosnian because such designation has come to represent nationalities rather than ethnicities. However, the community in which we lived for the next five years was Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian.

My parents began working at factory manufacturing furnace filters. They earned 5.15 USD an hour for a weekly total of 206 USD before taxes. They began working part-time for a janitorial service because the combined weekly total of 412 USD was insufficient to support a family of three people. We only received government assistance in the form of "food stamps," which totaled $125 per month, and Medicaid for six

months. We never received other aid, such as temporary assistance for needy families, that refugees are otherwise entitled to. I attribute this to the unprofessional relationship with the caseworker.

I was enrolled in the local middle school, and like in Germany, had no friends because I did not speak English. Other children would take advantage by asking I repeat derogatory and racial slurs. I had multiple incidents of stomachaches in middle school, some of which were probably due to anxiety, but others due to discomfort. I was uncomfortable being separated from my parents and would often be sent home by the nurse. I eventually adjusted and transitioned from middle to high school. I made more friends – many of whom were either Bosnian, Croatian, or Serbian – and had a relatively typical "American" adolescence. My first job was as a lifeguard at a local waterpark. My second job was as a model or brand representative for Hollister Co., an upscale American lifestyle brand owned by Abercrombie and Fitch.

I was a mediocre student in middle school, which disappointed my parents, so I began taking my academic pursuits seriously. Despite only earning a combined weekly total of 618 USD before taxes, my parents hired a private tutor and paid her 223% more than they earned per hour (i.e., 25 USD). I became a better student over time and began to enjoy reading. After high school, I was admitted to Rockford College. During my second year of college we became eligible for citizenship. Both my mother and I passed the interview, which entailed answering questions related to United States history (e.g., "What are the three branches of government?").

My father, on the other hand, had difficulties grasping English because of spelling and pronunciation. He did not pass the citizenship interview and left the room in tears. I

had never seen my father cry before. After several months of studying, and probably a lenient USCIS officer, he passed the interview. We became naturalized as citizens several months later. I frequently reflect with my partner, Kailey Mrosak, on how I may not have been granted admission to the United States now. The events after September 11, 2001 – in addition to those over the most recent presidential election – drastically changed resettlement practices.

Dr. Wieling was my primary advisor on this dissertation. We conceptualized the study together, designing the survey (i.e., first aim) and interview protocol (i.e., second aim). Dr. Piehler served as co-advisor and critical consultant. He provided feedback throughout both studies with emphasis on- and oversight of- the survey. Both collaborations are addressed in more detail later. I also received support for the first aim through the AAMFT, MFP DCF.

Identification and participant recruitment began after approval from my doctoral dissertation committee and University of Minnesota IRB. The second aim would not have been possible without Ibrahim Rddad and Saleh Saeid Alshihr, who served as interpreters and cultural brokers. Ibrahim is a professional Arabic interpreter whom I met during my doctoral internship at the CVT in Minnesota. We shared several psychotherapy clients for over one year, and as such, were comfortable collaborating. Saleh is a native Arabic speaker and doctoral student in marriage and family therapy at Saint Mary's University in Texas. Although we have not collaborated in the past, we share a scholarly interest at the intersection between psychological stress and traditionally marginalized groups.

Ibrahim Rddad

Ibrahim was born in Er-Rich, a town in the former Erracidia Province of Morocco, on the banks of the Ziz River (see Figure 13). His mother, Lala Fatima (née Elghali), was a homemaker who married at a young age. Ahmed, his father, owned a small restaurant (i.e., Café Salam) in town. After four unsuccessful attempts of having children, Lala gave birth to Mohammad. They had three more children, with Ibrahim being the second-oldest. Lala raised their children in a three-bedroom adobe house on the outskirts of Er-Rich. Ibrahim began helping his father around the café at a young age by bussing tables and making nearby deliveries. This taught him to communicate with people and treat everyone the same regardless of background. After graduating from the University of Al Quaraouiyine, Ibrahim enrolled in graduate school at Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah University instead of becoming a civil servant. He earned a small salary teaching Arabic to Peace Corps volunteers and serving as their cultural broker.

Ibrahim was introduced to Mary Jane Jacobs, a volunteer on assignment from the United States. They married the following year after her parents visited Morocco. Jane and Ibrahim moved to the United States shortly thereafter and lived with her parents in Ramsey, Minnesota for six months. They moved to Minneapolis after the birth of their first child. Ibrahim enrolled in an English-learning course at the University of Minnesota when their landlord, who also owned an interpretation agency, asked if he could interpret at the Hennepin County Government Center. He gained experience interpreting in various settings such as clinics, courts, and schools before working for the CVT after the arrival of refugees from Iraq. The most satisfying aspect of interpreting for him is witnessing growth and change in the clinical setting.

Saleh Alshihr

Saleh was born in Tabuk, near the border of Jordan, in Saudi Arabia (see Figure 14). His mother, Fatima (née Saleh), was a homemaker. Saeed, his father, was a staff sergeant in the Office of Personnel Affairs of the Royal Saudi Arabian Armed Forces. Fatima and Saeed had eight more children, with Saleh among the youngest. He completed his primary education in Khamis Mushait. At Riyadh University, which has since changed its name to King Saud University, Saleh studied psychology. He worked full-time in the office of student affairs at Riyadh University and part-time at a Charity Committee for Orphans Care, a non-profit organization for orphaned children (i.e., children born outside of marriage, or whose father's die unexpectedly, are considered orphans in Saudi Arabia).

While working at Riyadh University and the Charity Committee for Orphans Care, Saleh obtained an advanced certificate in general studies and enrolled in the counseling psychology master's program. This is where he met his future wife, Raghad (née Ali). Saleh and Raghad were paired to visit orphaned children together because it is culturally inappropriate and illegal for women to interact with unrelated men. They subsequently married and had four children, one girl and three boys. After graduate school, he became a lecturer in the Department of Psychology at Al-Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University. After careful consideration, Saleh and Raghad decided to move their family abroad so he could obtain a doctorate in MFT. Saleh is a fourth-year doctoral student completing his clinical internship at Catholic Charities and Refugee Services of Texas. The most satisfying aspect of practice for him is helping refugee families regain not only stability but also their dignity.

Elizabeth Wieling

Dr. Wieling, associate professor in the Department of Family Social Science at the University of Minnesota, served as my primary academic advisor over the past four years. As a licensed marriage and family therapist (LMFT), she is an expert in treating the effects of natural (e.g., hurricanes) and human-caused (e.g., war) trauma. Dr. Wieling also has an extensive research agenda directed at developing systemic preventive interventions for communities affected by traumatic stress, including post-conflict settings and migrants (i.e., immigrants and refugees) in the United States. The impetus for our collaboration was based on joint distress over unprecedented violence and subsequent displacement of Syrians. These aims are therefore humble attempts to address and contribute useful knowledge of use in supporting displaced Syrians, along with other groups, in the future.

Trustworthiness

Despite the absence of a universal definition, "trustworthiness" is based on the premise of sound evidence and strong results (Krefting, 1991). Establishing trustworthiness is different for quantitative and qualitative studies. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), qualitative research requires differentiating between "conventional" and "naturalistic paradigms." Conventional paradigms include internal and external assumptions of validity, reliability, and objectivity. Naturalistic paradigms, on the other hand, emphasize different standards by acknowledging that reality is subjective rather than objective.

While the participants and I share similar resettlement experiences, which relates to the second aim, I recognize considerable differences in privilege. These include race,

ethnicity, gender, education, and legal status. Combined with sociopolitical anti-refugee sentiment, these differences made it challenging to recruit participants. It also made it difficult for some participants to openly share their experiences with me. Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed an evaluative criterion to maintain ethical standards, discussed in more detail later, and enhance trustworthiness in qualitative research: a) credibility, b) transferability, c) dependability, and d) confirmability.

Credibility

"Credibility" corresponds to internal validity (i.e., the extent to which a conclusion is warranted based on findings). Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommend several techniques to enhancing credibility: a) prolonged engagement, b) persistent observation, c) triangulation, d) peer debriefing, and e) member checking.

Prolonged engagement. This technique entails building a collaborative relationship and trust with participants through physical presence. Credibility cannot be established without "recourse to the data sources themselves" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 213). Establishing trust with participants is important because their experiences can become distorted by the researcher's presence. However, there is no standard or pre-determined length of time for establishing trust (i.e., it can range from a few days to a week, and for larger studies, months).

The most important aspect of prolonged engagement is being present long enough to gain contextual understanding. This includes noticing discrepancies in data presentation (e.g., participant responses) through trust and facilitating disclosure of participants' multiple realities. Prolonged engagement was achieved through gaining considerable understanding of the USRAP, along with participants' experiences

navigating asylum in the United States, through clinical practice. Although I could have continued to learn given the continuously shifting sociopolitical landscape – nationally and internationally – my clinical experience was adequate to inform these studies.

Persistent observation. This technique emphasizes the importance of ongoing observation in order to distinguish between relevant and irrelevant aspects of the phenomenon being studied. Persistent observation refers to the depth of information (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 90). In addition to being immersed in different aspects of refugee resettlement over the past six years, persistent observation was achieved by engaged with Syrian refugees and stakeholders through the duration of both studies. I continued to develop my understanding of the phenomenon beyond data collection by reading publications, scholarly and mainstream while interacting with stakeholders active in national and international resettlement efforts.

Triangulation. This technique is a process of combining different data sources while studying a phenomenon to minimize skewing or misrepresenting findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It can be accomplished through different sources of information, including literature and stakeholders, data collection methods, and participants. The primary concern for the first aim was that participants would not respond due to fear of how the findings would be used (e.g., justification for limiting refugee resettlement efforts).

This was a significant concern because previous research of the USRAP is deficit-based. It emphasizes the program's negative qualities while inadvertently minimizing positive qualities. Multiple solicitation messages were sent to eligible participants to increase the survey response rate, and in doing so, decrease the potential for

misperception. In addition to sending multiple solicitation messages, participants' questions and concerns were answered in as much detail as possible. Melanie Nezer, senior vice president of public affairs at HIAS, was also recruited to send a solicitation message to members.

Peer debriefing. This technique entails ongoing consultation with peers – or members of the committee in the context of these studies – to discuss questions related to methodology, the researcher's preconceived notions, and interpretation of findings. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), peer debriefing is critical for several reasons. The most of these is to maintain researcher's honesty by probing his or her biases and exploring threats to the interpretation of results. Another reason is to test working hypotheses by asking questions for the researcher to defend his or her position. Peer consultation is also an opportunity for the researcher to clear thoughts and feelings that may otherwise cloud his or her judgement. Since there is no recommended debriefing format (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), peer debriefing was achieved by maintaining contact with Dr. Wieling and Dr. Piehler. This included in-person meetings, telephone conversations, and e-mails. Discussing emerging challenges, along with gaining different perspectives, facilitated my understanding of the research process.

Member checking. This technique consists of giving participants an opportunity to provide feedback after data is analyzed (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I was unable to solicit participant feedback due to several challenges. Maintaining anonymity was critical to increasing participant response rate for the first aim and facilitating trust for the second aim. Regarding the second aim, participants did not have Internet access aside from two that were interviewed in English. They were also hesitant of exchanging sensitive

information, irrespective of it being de-identified, over a medium (i.e., Internet) they did not understand. Their hesitance is consistent with challenges of resettlement research (Jacobsen & Landau, 2003). Member checking was achieved by asking clarifying questions during interviews. This included reviewing audio recordings with each interpreter to confirm participant response accuracy.

Transferability

This technique is different from generalizability, or internal and external validity for that matter, because it is synonymous with similarity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It refers to the degree to which findings can be transferred from one context to another. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), transferability can be achieved through awareness of "sending" (i.e., researcher) and "receiving" (i.e., participant) contexts. Transferability was achieved by describing the underlying assumptions of each aim along with their context. The research design of the first aim corresponds to that of the second aim. Moreover, the first aim informed the second aim in that it contextualized participants' experiences navigating the three stages of resettlement.

Dependability

This technique refers to the extent to which a conclusion is warranted based on findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Dependability was achieved through data auditing. Dr. Wieling read the qualitative and quantitative findings of both aims. She independently reviewed all transcripts and summaries for consistency. Dr. Piehler primarily reviewed the quantitative findings of the second aim to ensure analytic accuracy and presentation clarity. Furthermore, each auditor offered feedback throughout data analysis.

Confirmability

This technique refers to the extent to which findings are influenced by participants rather than researcher bias, motivation, or interest. By questioning whether data supports findings, it is an important aspect of ensuring trustworthiness. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest several techniques in establishing confirmability: a) audit trail and b) reflexivity.

Audit trail. This technique entails a detailed account of what steps were taken during a study. Edward Halpern (1983), as cited by Lincoln and Guba (1985), proposed several audit trail categories: a) raw data, b) data reduction and analysis, c) data reconstruction and synthesis, process notes, and d) materials. "Raw data" includes, but is not limited to, interview audio, interview transcripts, written notes, and other documents. "Reduction" and "analysis," on the other hand, entails condensing data into summaries for future reference. Similarly, "data reconstruction" and "synthesis" consists of comparing emerging findings to previous studies. "Process notes" include everything related to research methodology whereas materials consist of the research proposal and personal notes (e.g., reflexive journal entries).

Reflexivity. This technique requires the researcher to acknowledge his or her influence at every stage of the study (Halpern, 1983). Reflexivity was achieved by maintaining a reflexive journal for the duration of both studies (see Appendix N). I wrote about my thoughts, feelings, and lingering questions before and after each interview. I shared these entries with Dr. Wieling on a regular basis to minimize, or at least account for, my influence on the study. As noted earlier, the audit trail included participant sociodemographic and screening measures, interview protocol, audio interview and transcript, preliminary analysis drafts, and process notes.

Ethical Consideration and Study Support

Both studies were approved by the IRB at the University of Minnesota. Data safety and monitoring programs were put into place to maintain compliance with privacy standards, especially while traveling to- and from- the University of Minnesota. Considerable measures were also taken to ensure secure storage of data while not on campus. Both studies were funded by the AAMFT, MFP DCF. They were also funded by the David and Karen Olson Fellowship of the Department of Family Social Science at the University of Minnesota.

Conclusion

The research methodology was presented in this chapter, including procedures and measures used in each study. The CRM, a comprehensive survey developed to assess organizational readiness for change across five dimensions (i.e., knowledge of efforts, leadership, climate, knowledge about issue, and resources for efforts), was adapted for online distribution (i.e., first aim). Qualtrics was used to send and manage distribution of the survey to leaders of resettlement affiliates across the United States. Data were analyzed using a qualitative approach. After exploring frequencies and distributions, open-ended questions were examined using a six-step thematic analytic method (i.e., gaining familiarity with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming previously identified themes, and writing the report).

Participants were screened for psychological distress using the Brief Refugee Mental Health Screener (i.e., second aim). A semi-structured interview protocol, guided by three grand tour questions that correspond to each stage of resettlement, was then

conducted. Narratives of both participants and the research team (i.e., PI, professionally-trained interpreters/cultural brokers, and co-advisors) were then presented. This was followed by an account of how trustworthiness was established, in addition to, ethical consideration that were taken into account for each study. Findings are organized by study and presented in the next chapter.

Chapter 4: Results

> *It is as if families on the run are shattered by something other than just grenades. The flight and fear tears us apart and those parts land in all kinds of places – we don't even know where. But we always try to find them afterwards.*
>
> *Henning G. Mankell*
> Swedish Author

This chapter presents the findings of each study separately. Quantitative findings are presented before qualitative findings. In the first aim, findings from open-ended qualitative survey questions are presented by dimension assessed (i.e., organizational efforts, community efforts, leadership efforts, community climate, community knowledge, and community resources). Themes and corresponding sub-themes are defined. Labels closely correspond to the actual words used by participants. Quotes are provided when applicable to illustrate their meaning across each dimension. Findings from the second aim are organized by system level (i.e., individual, microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem).

First Aim: Nationwide Survey of Resettlement Affiliates

The first aim surveyed organizational leaders about Syrian refugee R&P efforts. Organizations were expecting to receive more refugees. But growing anti-refugee sentiment following the election of Donald Trump as President of the United States cast doubt on these expectations. Organizations were primarily concerned with identifying adequate housing – given the large size of families from Syria – securing employment, and delivering the post-arrival social orientation. Over half the organizations were "moderately prepared" to facilitate Syrian refugee resettlement in their community. Findings are presented by dimension assessed. They are also presented by region

because, as discussed in the third chapter, it is how the federal government determines the annual admission ceiling (e.g., Zong & Batalova, 2017; Bruno, 2016).

Dimension 1: Organizational Efforts

The first dimension assessed was *organizational efforts*. This dimension consists of questions that address critical aspects of Syrian refugee resettlement efforts. These include coordination with individual schools and/or districts, administration of initial mental health assessments, mental health and legal referrals, in addition to, management of resettlement priorities (e.g., housing, employment, etc.).

Quantitative survey results. Most organizations (n = 61, 81.3%) resettled Syrian refugees; 44% of the total number of Syrians (RPC, 2017) to be specific, over the past three years (i.e., 2013-2016). Before the presidential inauguration, which led to a dramatic shift in the national sociopolitical landscape, most (n = 57, 76%) also expected to resettle refugees in the next three years (i.e., 2017-2020). Most (n = 56, 74.7%) organizations coordinate with individual schools and/or districts in the resettlement of Syrian refugee children. This is consistent with nearly half of Syrian refugees admitted to the United States over the last three years being minors, 47% were under 14 years of age (RPC, 2017).

Less than half the organizations (n = 34, 45.3%) perform mental health assessments as part of the resettlement process. More than half (n = 51, 68%) make mental health referrals in the community. This applies to legal matters as well in that less than half (n = 24, 32%) handle immigration-related legal matters directly (i.e., internally) while others make external (i.e., community) referrals. The efforts, priorities, and policies

of almost all organizations (*n* = 57, 76%) was to resettle individuals and families rather than individuals. This suggests greater emphasis on family reunification.

More than half the organizations (*n* = 52, 69.3%) are concerned with identifying adequate housing followed by securing employment (*n* = 39, 52%) and delivering social orientations (*n* = 36, 48%; see Table 7). While most organizations were frustrated with unrealistic resettlement expectations from Syrian refugees and increased demands by the ORR, over half agreed (*n* = 44, 58.7%) with their performance being measured by how many refugees achieve economic self-sufficiency. Given the challenges with refugee resettlement, less than half (*n* = 32, 42.7%) were "moderately prepared" to facilitate Syrian refugee resettlement in their community (*M* = 3.98, *SD* = .79, Range: 1-5; see Table 8).

Northeast. Half the organizations were "moderately prepared" (*n* = 11, 50%), followed by "somewhat prepared" (*n* = 5, 22.7%) and "extremely prepared" (*n* = 3, 13.6%), to resettle Syrian refugees. None were "extremely unprepared" or "slightly prepared." Nearly all organization resettled Syrian refugees over the last three years (*n* = 21, 95.5%). Over half were concerned with housing efforts (*n* = 17, 77.3%) but divided between concern for employment (*n* = 11, 50%) and social orientation (*n* = 11, 50%) efforts.

South. Less than half the organizations were "moderately prepared" (*n* = 10, 40%). This was followed by "extremely prepared" (*n* = 5, 40%) and "somewhat prepared" (*n* = 4, 16%), to resettle Syrian refugees. However, one organization was "extremely unprepared" (*n* =1, 4%). Nearly all resettled Syrian refugees over the last three years (*n* = 20, 80%). Over half were concerned with housing efforts (*n* = 16, 64%).

They were nearly divided between concern for employment (*n* = 13, 52%) and social orientation (*n* = 14, 56%) efforts.

West. Organizations were almost equally divided between being "moderately prepared" (*n* = 4, 44.4%) and "extremely prepared" (*n* = 2, 33.3%) to resettle Syrian refugees. None were "extremely unprepared," "slightly prepared," or "somewhat prepared." Nearly all resettled Syrian refugees over the last three years (*n* = 7, 77.8%). Nearly all organizations also reported being concerned with housing efforts (*n* = 7, 77.8%). Over half were concerned with employment efforts (*n* = 6, 66.7%) but they were almost divided between concern for social orientation efforts (*n* = 5, 55.6%).

Midwest. Less than half the organizations were "moderately prepared" (*n* = 7, 38.9%), followed by "somewhat prepared" (*n* = 5, 27.8%) and "extremely prepared" (*n* = 5, 27.8%), to resettle Syrian refugees. Nearly all resettled Syrian refugees over the last three years (*n* = 13, 72.2%). Over half the organizations were concerned with housing efforts (*n* = 12, 66.7%). They were divided between concern for employment (*n* = 9, 50%) and social orientation (*n* = 9, 50%) efforts.

Open-ended qualitative survey results. *How has the resettlement of Syrian refugees been going; what, if anything, needs improvement?* Four major and two minor themes emerged in response to this question. The first major theme is *inconsistent resettlement expectations*. This theme describes expectations from the resettlement organizations (e.g., more refugees but less funding) and refugees (e.g., distribution of resources, such as housing). The director of program effectiveness at an organization in the Northeast remarked that "it has been hard to resettle the Syrian refugees [sic] due to their expectations around acceptable housing and financial support." Similarly, the

director of another organization in the Northeast added that "the United States committed to bring in 10,000 Syrians but this was not accompanied by an increase in funding or capacity."

The second major theme is *resettlement program needs repair*. It is an extension of the first major theme but includes the *frustration with resettlement* sub-theme. As noted by the director of refugee and immigrant services, also at an organization in the Northeast, "families have high expectations of agency support that does not match reality." "The entire USRAP needs a major overhaul and re-think," was added by the director of refugee resettlement at another organization in the Northeast.

The third major theme is *non-problematic resettlement process*. This theme describes a range of experiences (e.g., "not received any," to "routine," and "ongoing," to "fine," "well," and "okay."). A participant, who did not provide a title but was from an organization in the South, commented that "no problems have been reported from any of the service sectors with whom we collaborate." Another participant from an organization in the South, who also did not provide a title, added that "it has been going well."

The fourth major theme*, revisions to the resettlement program*, suggests that refugees' inconsistent resettlement expectations are due to an ineffective (pre- and post-resettlement) orientation. The director of another organization in the South remarked that an "extended cultural orientation is needed." A participant, also from an organization in the South who did not provide a title, added that the "overseas orientation needs to be broadened so they [sic] exactly understand what can be realistic expectations in the United States."

The first minor theme is *compassionate resettlement initiatives*. It represents how refugees are grateful for the assistance they receive despite ongoing resettlement challenges. “The Syrians we have resettled have been very gracious and patient with our resettlement efforts,” remarked the director of refugee services at an organization in the Midwest. Similarly, the director of an organization in the Northeast stated that “it has been a pleasure serving Syrians as they are truly grateful for our assistance.” The second minor theme, *inaccurate media portrayals*, is an extension of the first. The participant who remarked pleasure in serving Syrians also noted that “they are nothing like how the negative media has portrayed them.”

Dimension 2: Community Efforts

The second dimension assessed was *community efforts*. This dimension evaluated community engagement in resettlement efforts of Syrian refugees (i.e., general awareness, persistent misconceptions or incorrect information about Syrian refugees, perception of success or failure regarding resettlement efforts, and whether members of the community have developed new efforts).

Quantitative survey results. Most organizations (n = 53, 86.8%) engaged in Syrian refugee resettlement efforts although primarily through collaboration with other social services agencies (e.g., religious institutions of various denominations, school districts, health departments, employers, learning centers, and other support programs). Knowledge of these efforts among members of the community varied: “some” (n = 18, 24.3%) and “many” (n = 17, 23%) had awareness, “some” (n = 27, 36.5%) could name the efforts, and “some” (n = 24, 32.4%) knew their purpose. More than half the

organizations reported misconceptions or incorrect information about resettlement efforts in the community (*n* = 48, 64.9%).

Northeast. Most organizations engaged in resettlement efforts (*n* = 18, 81.8%). They reported that "many" (*n* = 9, 40.9%) and "some" (*n* = 5, 22.7%) members of the community had awareness of efforts. Similarly, "some" community members could name the efforts (*n* = 13, 59.1%) or their purpose (*n* = 9, 40.9%). Most organizations also reported misconceptions or incorrect information about resettlement efforts in the community (*n* = 15, 72.7%).

South. More than half the organizations engaged in resettlement efforts (*n* = 17, 68%). They reported that "some" (*n* = 6, 24%) members of the community had awareness of efforts but that only "some" (*n* = 5, 20%) could name them. More than half also reported misconceptions or incorrect information about resettlement efforts in the community (*n* = 14, 56%).

West. More than half the organizations engaged in resettlement efforts (*n* = 6, 66.7%). They reported that "some" (*n* = 6, 24%), followed by "many" (*n* = 4, 16%) and "most" (*n* = 4, 16%), community members had awareness of efforts. But only "some" could name them (*n* = 5, 20%). Similarly, more than half the organizations reported misconceptions or incorrect information about resettlement efforts in the community (*n* = 5, 55.6%).

Midwest. More than half the organizations engaged in resettlement efforts (*n* = 12, 66.7%). They reported that "some" (*n* = 3, 33.3%) and "many" (*n* = 3, 33.3%) community members were aware of efforts. But only a "few" (*n* = 4, 16%) and "some" (*n*

= 5, 20%) could name them. Most organizations also reported misconceptions or incorrect information about efforts in the community (n = 13, 72.2%).

Open-ended qualitative survey results. *What are some existing community efforts in resettlement and how long have they been going on?* Two major themes and one minor theme emerged in response to this question. The first theme, *ongoing initiatives*, suggests that resettlement starts with an organization before branching out into the community. "Resettlement starts through our resettlement agency," was remarked by the director of refugee services at an organization in the Midwest.

The second theme is *community collaboration and education*. It describes ongoing collaboration between resettlement organizations and community members (e.g., churches and other social services agencies). This theme also reflects using inter-agency collaboration to educate members of the community about resettlement issues. "The refugee resettlement services providers participate in a quarterly meeting with many of the community leaders from other sectors," explained the executive director of counseling and adoption services at an organization in the Northeast, "to discuss current trends in resettlement, current issues facing providers, and to address any community concerns/problems." The sectors endorsed by this participant include education, health, public welfare, government, and mental health.

The minor theme is *existing resettlement efforts*. It acknowledges resettlement efforts within organizations but also between other social service agencies and the greater community. "Resettlement has been going on for the past eight years with the first Syrian family arriving in 2015," remarked the director of refugee and immigration services at an organization in the Northeast. Similar sentiments were endorsed by a grant match

specialist at an organization in the South, "There have been two refugee resettlement agencies for the last five years."

How do members of your community have the knowledge [you] previously indicated? Three major themes emerged in response to this question. The first theme is *media*. Most participants identified traditional media as the primary source of knowledge (e.g., newspapers and television) for community members. "There has been news coverage by newspapers and television," was noted by the resettlement manager at an organization in the South. The director of refugee resettlement at an organization in the Northeast added, "from reading news, articles, etc."

Participants also acknowledged modern media outlets (e.g., social media) as a source of information. "Media and social media," was stated by a participant who did not provide a title but was from an organization in the South. The program manager of an organization in the Midwest added, "it is what they [sic] consume via social media." These responses reflect increased awareness of social media as a source of information. The participant who remarked agency use of social media added, "the presidential debates" as another source of information. This response reflects considerable awareness of how the sociopolitical climate, particularly following the presidential election and inauguration, impacts refugee resettlement efforts.

The second theme is *outreach*. It describes organizational initiatives to distribute community knowledge of Syrian refugee resettlement efforts. This includes regular interaction with community stakeholders such as institutions of higher education, businesses, religious institutions of various denominations, and the Syrian community. The purpose of such collaboration and awareness raising is to correct misinformation

while clarifying existing efforts. As suggested by the director of resettlement at an organization in the Midwest, “we conduct outreach regularly to community programs, faith-based organizations, schools and businesses to educate the community.” Similarly, the director of an organization in the Northeast added, “Largely outreach from resettlement agencies and local ethnic communities making connections with refugees.”

The third theme is *use of workgroups.* This theme, although similar to the previous theme (i.e., *agency outreach*), describes targeting community leaders with the power and ability to influence policies. Organizations reported holding regular meetings with relevant stakeholders in the community. “Quarterly workgroup sessions (also, this workgroup includes representatives from the [state redacted] ORR to answer any questions about statewide trends or issues/concerns,” was reported by the executive director of counseling and adoption services at an organization in the Northeast. It is important to note that ORR representatives are given an overview of current efforts but also answer questions from the affiliates. This was confirmed by the director of refugee services at an organization in the Northeast, “we hold quarterly meetings; including with county executive and council and mayor’s office.”

What are some obstacles to community members participating in current resettlement efforts of Syrian refugees? Four major themes emerged in response to this question. Anything that prevents community engagement in resettlement efforts, whether initiated by an organization or not, is considered an obstacle. "There is difficult access to some service for everyone when it comes to accessing healthcare systems, mental health, etc.,” was remarked by a participant who did not provide a title but was from an organization in the South. The first major theme is *language barriers*. This theme was

endorsed by many participants. According to the program manager of an organization in the Northeast, "mostly language differences and not being able to communicate."

The second theme is *misunderstanding of the resettlement process*. “There was misinformation when resettlement first started that we were bringing in 300 families in one year,” explained the program supervisor at an organization in the South, “This was inaccurate and has since been corrected. But the (incorrect) statistic was published on social media and once it is out there...” According to the resettlement program director at an organization in the Northeast, “they need more information.”

The third theme is *politicization and prejudice*. Refugee resettlement was a platform of all presidential candidates during the primaries. This made politicization of refugee resettlement unavoidable. Several participants reported that politicization became associated with prejudice and discrimination. “People have prejudice and biases, they are scared from newcomers,” remarked the director of an organization in the Northeast. “Politicization in the recent year of [sic] Syrian issue and looking at Syrians as ISIS.” According to another participant, who did not provide a title but was from an organization in the Midwest, the only obstacle to resettlement was misinformation. “Aside national conversation claiming that Syrian refugees are a threat to security,” he explained.

The fourth theme is *insufficient resources*. This theme describes organizational resources, which are limited as previously suggested, that cut across all stages of the resettlement process. “The PRM does not provide sufficient funding of staff, operations, or direct assistance to ensure that refugees are properly welcomed and do not become impoverished upon arrival,” explained the director of refugee resettlement at an

organization in the Northeast. “Engaging volunteers and community members takes time and resources on the part of resettlement agencies, and staff are stretched too thin.”

Similar concerns were reported by the director of another organization in the Northeast. She also described how absence of resources indirectly impacts community perception of resettlement efforts. “Community members are frustrated by the short time frame of financial support, standard of housing, and number of services provided to refugees,” she remarked. But addressing community frustration inadvertently shifts organizational attention from supporting refugees. “This can inspire community members to work in a combative fashion with resettlement organizations that are limited by their scope of services, rather than by any bad intentions.”

What are some strengths and weaknesses of existing resettlement efforts [in your community]? Eight themes, evenly divided by strength- and weakness, emerged in response to this question. The first strength-based theme is *welcoming community*. It describes acceptance of refugees and local initiatives to facilitate their transition to the United States. “Our community has historically been very welcoming for refugees,” was reported by executive director of an organization in the Midwest. The director of an organization in the Northeast reported similar sentiments. “Many people are touched by the news and pictures of the child killed during migration,” she explained, “They felt sorry and demonstrated support.”

The second strength-based theme is *availability of basic resources and services*. It describes strong case management to promote refugee independence, staff dedication, and greater organizational support. The director of resettlement effectiveness at an organization in the Northeast remarked, “the strengths of the resettlement efforts, from

the perspective of this agency, are strong case management support and educational/orientation/culture and efforts that promote independence." "Strengths include a dedicated, hard-working staff, larger numbers of interested community volunteers, and large organizational backing," was added by the director at an organization in the Northeast.

The third strength-based theme is *availability of basic resources*. It describes entry level jobs, although these may not lead to economic self-sufficiency, and educational opportunities (e.g., English language classes). "Availability of 'survival' or first jobs and opportunities for education once refugees have English skills," was reported by the president of an organization in the Midwest. The director of refugee and immigration services at an organization in the South confirmed this opinion, "a [sic] strong local economy and abundance of employment opportunities."

The fourth strength-based theme, which was endorsed by nearly all participants, is *agency/community collaboration*. It represents a collaborative effort between resettlement organizations and other community organizations (e.g., religious and social services). According to a case manager at an organization in the South, "there is a very strong collaborative effort among all refugee service providers and the social services community." "Strong volunteer support, business community and provider support," was added by the director of an organization in the Northeast. Taken together, the strengths reported by participants suggest a holistic approach to refugee resettlement that augments the organization's available resources with community resources.

In contrast, the first weakness-based theme is *time constraints*. These include organizational staff being unable to complete necessary aspects of resettlement in a

timely manner, particularly with the presence of significant health issues, and an influx of refugees within a short period. The director of program effectiveness at an organization in the Northeast acknowledged such challenges. “The amount of time it takes to complete the resettlement process when health issues are present,” she explained. Similar sentiments were shared by the program manager of refugee resettlement at an organization in the Midwest, “tight time requirements for services.”

Funding concerns is the second weakness-based theme. It was endorsed by nearly all participants and is in direct contrast to the second strength-based theme (i.e., *availability of resources*). But this theme was largely a response to increased resettlement demands without corresponding increase in financial support or resources. “Increased numbers have not equated to increased funding,” explained the director of an organization in the Northeast. The resettlement manager of an organization in the south confirmed this explanation, “limited funding from the government.”

The third weakness-based theme is *resource concerns*. It reflects unaffordable housing options and inaccessible public transportation. “Affordable housing crisis facing all low-income households,” according to the program manager at an organization in the Northeast, “impacts resettlement.”

The fourth weakness-based theme is *rhetoric of distrust*. Although only explicitly reported by a few participants, it describes an atmosphere of community distrust perpetuated by elected officials and the media. The regional director of an organization in the Northeast reflected on the sociopolitical shift. “The political environment and rhetoric has made things worse for Syrian refugees,” she said. “One city commissioner voicing concerns has raised profile and unfounded concerns,” was added by the vice president of

an organization in the Midwest. Participants acknowledged considerable disparities between expectations and reality, particularly in terms of funding and resource availability. They also noted that negative stereotypes about Syrian refugees, and the resettlement process for that matter, make community engagement more difficult.

Dimension 3: Leadership Efforts

The third dimension assessed was *leadership efforts*. This dimension evaluated engagement of leaders – government officials, civil leaders, catalysts, and connectors – in Syrian refugee resettlement efforts.

Quantitative survey results. Organizations were the most supported by civil leaders (n = 39, 52.7%) followed by official leaders (n = 26, 35.1%), catalysts (n = 25, 33.8%), and connectors (n = 25, 33.8%). Organizations were also supported by religious institutions of different denominations along with advocacy groups (n = 10, 13.5%). While concern among organizations was evenly distributed (M = 5.55, SD = 2.24, Range: 1-8), two clustered around "indifference" (n = 9, 12.2%) and "general concern" (n = 9, 12.2%). Priority clustered around "indifference" (n = 13, 17.6%), "moderate" (n = 7, 9.5%), and "high" (n = 7, 9.5%). Organizations (n = 24, 32.4%) reported that some community leaders were supportive of expanding resettlement efforts while others did not know their stance (n = 21, 28.4%).

Northeast. Half the organizations reported that official (n = 11, 50%) and civil (n = 12, 54.5%) leaders did not support expanding resettlement efforts in the community. Less than half (n = 8, 36.4%) reported catalysts as being supportive and half (n = 11, 50%) reported that connectors support expanding resettlement efforts. Although concern among leaders varied, it clustered around "indifference" (M = 5.28, SD = 1.77, Range: 1-

10). Priority in addressing resettlement efforts among leaders, however, was relatively high between "general" and "moderate priority" (M = 6.64, SD = 1.50, Range: 1-10).

South. Most organizations reported that official leaders did not support expanding resettlement efforts in the community (n = 20, 80%). Half reported that civil leaders were unsupportive (n = 11, 50%) and more than half (n = 18, 72%) reported that catalysts did not support expanding efforts. Most also reported that connectors did not support expanding efforts (n = 19, 76%). Concern among leaders varied but, similar to the Northeast, was between "indifference" and "general concern" (M = 5.86, SD = 2.66, Range: 1-10). But priority among leaders in the South was slightly higher and leaning towards "moderate" (M = 5.58, SD = 2.39, Range: 1-10) compared to the Northeast.

Midwest. More than half the organizations reported that official leaders did not support expanding resettlement efforts in the community (n = 11, 61.1%). Less than half reported civil leaders as being supportive (n = 7, 38.9%). Half reported that catalysts were unsupportive of expanding efforts (n = 9, 50%). More than half reported that connectors did not support expanding efforts (n = 12, 66.7%). Concern among leaders in the Midwest also varied but, like in the South, clustered around "indifference" and "concern" (M = 5.86, SD = 2.32, Range: 1-10). Priority to expand resettlement efforts was the highest of all regions leaning towards "moderate" (M = 6.71, SD = 2.52, Range: 1-10).

West. More than half reported that official leaders did not support expanding resettlement efforts in the community (n = 6, 66.7%). Less than half (n = 3, 33.3%) reported civil leaders as unsupportive and nearly all (n = 8, 88.9%) reported that catalysts did not support expanding resettlement efforts. More than half reported that connectors

were unsupportive of expanding efforts (n = 7, 77.8%). Concern among leaders in the West was slightly lower compared to other regions, clustered between a "mild" and "general concern" (M = 4.60, SD = 2.30, Range: 1-10). But priority to expanding resettlement efforts clustered between "indifference" and "general" (M = 5.60, SD = 1.82, Range: 1-10).

Open-ended qualitative survey results. *How do leaders in your community show their support?* Five themes emerged in response to this question. The first theme is *advocacy/outreach*. It suggests that community leaders – whether in an official or unofficial capacity – reach out to the community on behalf of Syrian refugees. "Ask and advocate for resettlement efforts," was reported by a participant who did not provide a title from an organization in the south. The program manager for refugee resettlement at an organization in the Midwest added political activism. "Legislation, community support, support among business, and other initiatives," he said.

The second theme that emerged is *verbal support*. It is an extension of the previous theme because it reflects public advocacy of existing resettlement efforts, particularly for Syrian refugees. "Speaking out in favor, welcoming Syrians and other refugees," was noted by the executive director of an organization in the West. The director of an organization in the Northeast added, "Mostly spoken/symbolic shows of support to resettlement agencies."

Donations is the third theme. This includes volunteering, cash donations, in-kind (i.e., goods) donations, and completion of other administrative tasks (e.g., making telephone calls). The director of an organization in the West added, "Volunteerism, donation; cash and in-kind, and outreach." "Volunteering with refugees, donating

financially to resettlement agencies, providing interpretation services," was offered by the director of an organization in the Northeast.

The fourth theme is *education*. It describes the effort put into organizing community events, giving presentations, and facilitating forum discussions. "Educating the community about resettlement," was shared by the director of refugee services at an organization in the Midwest.

The fifth theme is *collaboration*. It also describes interagency cooperation to further resettlement efforts but at different stages of the process. "Connecting agencies that help before, during, and after the initial resettlement period," was noted by the director of program effectiveness at an organization in the Northeast. According to the resettlement manager of an organization in the South, "Connection to specialty medical services/ESL."

Why is or is not the resettlement of Syrian refugees a concern [to leadership] in your community? Four themes emerged in response to this question. The first theme is *welcoming community*. It describes community leaders as welcoming refugees broadly and Syrian refugees specifically. "This community is very welcoming to all refugees, including Syrians," was noted by the director of refugee services at an organization in the Midwest. The director of refugee and immigrant services at an organization in the Northeast stated, "Leadership speaks in general about welcoming immigrants, not just refugees. They want to help with the Syrian crisis as well."

The second theme is *responsibility*. It suggests that community leaders, despite at times not demonstrating support, feel responsible for- and motivated by- their religious faith to engage in Syrian refugee resettlement efforts. "Many community leaders want to

show support for what is politically popular. Others feel their humanitarian imperative," explained the director of an organization in the Northeast. "Others may feel their cultural background compels them to be concerned with the fate of refugees." "Many feel that it is their duty as a Christian, Muslim, or human to help refugees who are suffering and have endured hardship," was added by a match grant specialist at an organization in the South.

Benefits of resettlement is the third theme. It is an extension of the second theme (i.e., *responsibility*) and describes the economic and social benefits of refugee resettlement. "People of this community have seen the benefits of refugees and want those benefits to continue," was noted by the director of an organization in the Midwest. The director of immigrant and refugee services at an organization in the South added, "Immigrants have proven their value to the community over the years as they have become active community members, business owners, home owners, educators, and elected officials."

The fourth theme is *misinformation/fear*. It was the most common among participants and describes misinformation about the refugee resettlement process, particularly vetting, and concerns over terrorism. The resettlement manager at an organization in the Midwest remarked that, "Most community members with concern express fear of terrorism and concern about the vetting process." "It is a low concern mainly due to negative media, the election results, and the threat of ISIS," was added by the director of an organization in the Northeast. Several participants also expressed concern over the presidential election results and how it may lead to a drastic change in the resettlement process. The director of a refugee resettlement program at an

organization in the Northeast, noted concern that the shift in political leadership may stop refugee resettlement altogether. “New election results; afraid that resettlement will stop entirely,” he explained.

Despite prevailing fear of Syrian refugees, which is primarily due to misinformation, the director of an organization in the Northeast remarked that change was possible. “In one situation where university students were engaging in the effort of refugee resettlement through one on one contact when a student told her parents of this initiatives she was involved in her parents said, ‘just do not get involved with Syrians,” she explained. “The student, however, became involved with a Syrian family and persuaded her parents to come on a home visit. The result was a 180-degree turn around for the parents who after visiting left with overwhelming tears of joy when interacting with a Syrian couple and their six children. It was amazing!”

Dimension 4: Community Climate

The fourth dimension assessed, *community climate*, evaluated community engagement in Syrian refugee resettlement efforts. This includes concerns, opposition to resettlement efforts, and general intolerance.

Quantitative survey results. Concerns about resettlement efforts among members of the community varied between organization but clustered around “indifference” ($M = 5.41$, $SD = 2.38$). Although priority also varied, it was slightly higher with “general” ($M = 6.12$, $SD = 2.10$). Opposition to resettlement efforts of Syrian refugees by community members was reported by half the organizations ($n = 39$, 52.7%). Intolerance to resettlement efforts was endorsed by less than half ($n = 24$, 32.4%).

However, less than half the organizations did not know whether members of the community were intolerant or altogether or just opposed to efforts (n = 17, 23%).

Northeast. Concern about resettlement efforts among community members clustered around "moderate" (M = 5.57, SD = 2.17, Range: 1-10). Similarly, opposition to resettlement efforts by members of the community was reported by more than half the organizations (n = 12, 54.5%). But less than half the organizations did not know whether community members were altogether intolerant of resettlement efforts (n = 10, 45.2%).

South. Compared to the Northeast, concern about resettlement efforts among members of the community was slightly higher in the South (M = 6.00, SD = 2.42, Range: 1-10). But less than half the organizations reported opposition to resettlement efforts by community members (n = 11, 44%). Intolerance of resettlement efforts, among members of the community, was also reported by less than half (n = 9, 36%).

Midwest. Concern about resettlement efforts among community members was lower in the Midwest than the Northeast or South (M = 5.13, SD = 2.68, Range: 1-10). But opposition (n = 12, 66.7%) and intolerance (n = 9, 50%) to efforts were both higher in the Midwest.

West. Resettlement concern about efforts among members of the community was the lowest in the West (M = 3.75, SD = 1.50, Range: 1-10). Opposition to resettlement efforts, on the other hand, was similar (n = 4, 44%) and intolerance was lower (n = 2, 22.2%) compared to other regions.

Open-ended qualitative survey results. *Why is the resettlement of Syrian refugees in your community at the level of concern you previously indicate?* Four themes emerged in response to this question.

The first theme is *prejudice/discrimination/fear/threat* and suggests that communities are afraid of Syrian refugees. As noted by the director of program effectiveness at an organization in the Northeast, "the newness of the arrivals and the fear of the unknown." Similarly, the director of an organization in the Northeast explained that "to a certain segment of the population it is a great concern mainly due to Islamophobia and a national and global rhetoric about Syrian refugees." These responses reflect how fear is associated with misinformation about the vetting process. "Concerns of terrorism and the vetting process," was noted by the program manager at an organization in the Midwest.

The second theme is *political climate*. It is an extension of the previous theme because it attributes low community interest in Syrian refugee resettlement to the political climate and agenda. As the director of an organization in the South noted, "political climate effects general opinion in the communities." "We are concerned by the state's response to the resettlement of Syrian refugees," clarified the program supervisor at an organization in the South, "and [sic] are concerned that the state's fears may be echoed in some parts of the [state redacted]."

Expressed support is the third theme. It describes community concern of varying degrees with refugee resettlement efforts. As noted by the director of resettlement at an organization in the Midwest, "there has been very little concern expressed to our agency about the resettlement of Syrians. "[City redacted] is a welcoming community, we are not aware of any negative comments," was reported by a resettlement manager at an organization in the Midwest.

The fourth theme is *expressed concern*. It reflects that community members could be concerned with resettlement-related efforts without necessarily supporting them. This

there is therefore different from the previous theme. The director of a program in the West suggested that "it is a small and poor community so there is some concern about resources." This illustrates that fear of the unknown, in the context of Syrian refugee resettlement, is often due to perceived scarcity of existing resources. The director of refugee services at an organization in the Northeast noted the perception of refugees being a "drain on resources."

How might community members show their support in expanding the resettlement efforts of Syrian refugees? Three themes emerged in response to this question. The first theme is *advocacy/outreach*. It appeared in nearly all responses and suggests that direct involvement is necessary to demonstrating support. "Advocating for resettlement efforts by supporting legislation to advocate for refugees," according to the director of refugee resettlement at an organization in the Northeast, "and standing with them to address all attacks in the media." This theme reflects how addressing misinformation about Syrian refugees – generally perpetuated by the media – and sharing personal experiences with other members of the community are vital to expanding existing efforts. "Continue speaking out in favor and spreading the word of experiences on the ground level so that others see this as engagement," was offered as a method by the director of refugee resettlement at an organization in the Midwest.

The second theme is *volunteering*. It is an extension of the first theme because it describes that community participation is vital to supporting existing resettlement efforts. "Stepping forward and seeking involvement in the actual resettlement (i.e., post-arrival) efforts," was reported by the director of a resettlement program at an organization in the Northeast. A participant who did not provide a title but was also from an organization in

the Northeast added "offering to help provide orientation to newly arrived Syrians and becoming volunteers with our agency."

The third theme was *donations*. "Donating time and resources to the resettlement program," as suggested by a grant match specialist at an organization in the South, symbolizes support of resettlement efforts. This theme is different from *donations* in the third dimension (i.e., leadership efforts) because it refers to members of the community, largely the public made up of private citizens.

How do community members show their opposition to the resettlement of Syrian refugees? Four themes emerged in response to this question. *Phone calls* is the first theme and most common response. Community members frequently call organizations, along with local and state leaders, to declare their opposition to resettlement efforts. According to the director of programs at an organization in the Northeast, "call to complain or say they disagree, do not hire them and do not help make accommodations for them (i.e., language or interpretation)." They can also be "threatening with hateful messages," as remarked by a resettlement manager at an organization in the South.

The second theme is *media*. Members of the community demonstrate their opposition to Syrian refugee resettlement through both traditional (i.e., newspaper, television, and radio) and contemporary (i.e., e-mail, social media, and blogging) outlets. But opposition through traditional outlets, particularly the newspaper, was the most frequent. The vice president of an organization in the Midwest acknowledged that community members demonstrate their opposition through "letters to the local newspapers and calling in to local talk radio." "Trolling social media" was added by the program manager at another organization in the Midwest.

Community events is the third theme. Opposition to Syrian refugee resettlement was directly expressed to staff during events, through solicitation of anti-refugee speakers for rallies, and protests. As noted by director of program effectiveness at an organization in the Northeast, community members would demonstrate their opposition through "interaction with caseworkers in the community at times." The director of another program in the Northeast added "community meetings, bringing out-of-state anti-refugee speakers" as additional locations.

Legislation is the fourth theme. Community members also appealed directly to local and state leaders with their opposition to resettlement of Syrian refugees. They would "call the governor's office and the local resettlement office," according to a resettlement manager at an organization in the Midwest. A participant who did not provide a title but was from an organization in the South added that community members would also "push for legislative action to limit refugee resettlement in the state."

What are some circumstances in which members of the community might not tolerate the resettlement of Syrian refugees? Three themes emerged in response to this question. *Fear and risk/threat to security* is the first and by far the most common theme. Misinformation about the resettlement process, particularly vetting (i.e., security screening), fuels prejudice and discrimination based on stereotypes. "Fear, religious affiliation, political views, and national rhetoric," are causes of community intolerance according to the director of resettlement at an organization in the Northeast. "Mainly due to terrorist attacks reportedly committed by refugees in and outside of the United States," was added by a participant who did not provide a title but was from an organization in the Midwest. Similar sentiments were echoed by several others.

Although less common, the second theme is *economic concern/resentment.* Syrian refugees are typically resettled to lower socioeconomic neighborhoods due to limited resources and availability of housing. But receiving communities perceive their presence, along with limited government assistance, as a threat to already limited resources. The director of refugee and immigrant services at an organization in the Northeast suggested that "refugees are sometimes viewed as taking jobs and social service benefits away from Americans." The perception that Syrian refugees "increase the poverty rate of our community and that they take jobs that native-born Americans need" was added by the director at another organization in the Northeast.

Demographic change is the third theme and essentially an extension of the first theme (i.e., fear and risk/threat to security). Syrian refugees are viewed as changing community appearance without right or invitation. The director of an organization in the Northeast acknowledged the concern "that refugees are changing the face of our community." "A small but politically powerful group has helped draft legislation and lobbied legislators to push back against the resettlement program altogether" was offered by a participant who did not provide a title but was from an organization in the South, further illustrates such fear.

Dimension 5: Community Knowledge

The fifth dimension assessed was *community knowledge*. It evaluated community (i.e., town or city) awareness of Syrian refugee resettlement efforts, in addition to, their knowledge about refugees (e.g., who they are and where they come from).

Quantitative survey results. Over half the organizations indicated that community members had relatively little knowledge about the resettlement of Syrian

refugees (*M* = 4.00, SD = 1.70, Range: 1-10). This knowledge ranged from "low" (*n* = 10, 13.5%) to "little" (*n* = 8, 10.8%) and "some" (*n* = 7, 9.5%). Community members also had "some" knowledge of general efforts (*n* = 22, 29.7%) and the reasons for resettlement (*n* = 19, 25.7%). But "few" were aware of its consequences (*n* = 18, 24.3%).

Northeast. General knowledge about resettlement efforts among members of the community was between "some" (*n* = 7, 31.8%) and "many" (*n* = 5, 22.7%). Their awareness of the reasons for resettlement was also between "some" (*n* = 8, 36.4%) and "many" (*n* = 3, 13.6%). Awareness of resettlement consequences, on the other hand, was between "few" (*n* = 4, 18.2%) and "some" (*n* = 6, 27.3%).

South. General knowledge of resettlement efforts among community members in the south was between "few" (*n* = 2, 9.1%) and "some" (*n* = 7, 28%). Similarly, their awareness of the reasons for resettlement was between "few" (*n* = 5, 20%) and "some" (*n* = 4, 16%). But awareness of resettlement consequences, in contrast to the Northeast, was "few" (*n* = 7, 28%).

Midwest. General knowledge about resettlement efforts among members of the community was also between "some" (*n* = 6, 33.3%) and "many" (*n* = 4, 22.2%). Their awareness of the resettlement reasons was between "few" (*n* = 3, 16.7%) and "some" (*n* = 6, 33.3%). But their awareness of resettlement consequences was evenly split for "few" (*n* = 5, 27.8%) and "some" (*n* = 5, 27.8%).

West. Similarly, general knowledge of resettlement efforts among members of the community in the West was between "some" (*n* = 6, 33.3%) and "many" (*n* = 4, 22.2%). Their awareness of the resettlement reasons, however, was evenly split between "few" (*n* = 1, 11.1%), "some" (*n* = 1, 11.1%), and "many" (*n* = 1, 11.1%). Their awareness of

resettlement consequences, which did not include "many," was "few" (n = 2, 22.2%) and "some" (n = 1, 11.1%).

Open-ended qualitative survey results. *What are some misconceptions among community members about the resettlement of Syrian refugees?* Four major themes and one minor theme emerged in response to this question. The first and most common theme is *misunderstanding/ unawareness*. It reflects how members of the community are generally unfamiliar with resettlement and its stages (i.e., pre-migration, resettlement/migration, and post-migration/adjustment). This includes, but is not limited to, the vetting process (i.e., security screening) and distributions of resources upon arrival. The director of a program at an organization in the Northeast endorsed such pervasive beliefs among members of the community. "Syrians eligible for United States resettlement are among the populations arriving in Europe; by boat or over land," he explained. "Community members perceive resettlement agencies as being responsible for refugees," reported the director of refugee and immigrant services at another organization in the Northeast, "for a much more significant amount of time than they are."

The second theme is *drain on resources*. It is also an extension of the previous theme because it describes the false belief of community members that Syrian refugees not only receive considerable assistance from the government but that they are also a threat to employment opportunities of citizens. "They are taking jobs from Americans, receiving long-term and a great deal support from the government," explained the program manager at an organization in the Northeast.

The third theme is *improper security screening*. It reflects how misunderstanding of the vetting process incites fear. A participant who did not provide their title but was

from an organization in the South simply remarked "what vetting takes place." *Fear of terrorism* is the fourth theme. It is an extension of the previous themes because it suggests that misunderstanding of refugee resettlement is grounded in prejudicial stereotypes. "They are terrorists," was reported by the resettlement manager at an organization in the South.

A minor theme, because it did not emerge consistently among responses, is *political rhetoric.* It describes how rhetoric about Syrian refugees became political during the presidential campaign and inauguration. "The main misconception we hear," according to the director of refugee services at an organization in the Midwest, "is that refugees are just dropped here in the United States and that no one knows where they are or what they are doing."

Dimension 6: Community Resources

The sixth dimension, *community resources*, assessed availability of resources (e.g., funding, materials, staff, etc.) to facilitate Syrian refugee resettlement efforts. Since there were no open-ended questions, no qualitative results are presented.

Quantitative survey results. Half the organizations indicated being aware of available community resources to facilitate Syrian refugee resettlement efforts (n = 39, 52.7%). More resettlement efforts are funded publicly (n = 34, 45.9%), with state or federal government funding, than privately (n = 28, 37.8%). Private funding includes, but is not limited to, individual contributions from community members and faith groups. Less than half the participants (n = 24, 32.4%) reported that funding for current efforts will continue into the foreseeable future while others were unsure (n = 15, 20.3%).

Availability of volunteers was the highest with "many" (*n* = 23, 31.1%), followed by "some" (*n* = 21, 28.4%) for financial donations, "some" (*n* = 20, 27%) for physical space, and "some" (*n* = 18, 24.3%) for grants. Availability of experts was the lowest with "some" (*n* = 15, 20.3%). Less than half the organizations indicated that community members, along with leaders, would support using these resources to facilitate resettlement efforts of Syrian refugees (*n* = 31, 41.9%). They also reported that most efforts are put into seeking volunteers to increase availability of resources in the future (*M* = 3.50, *SD* = 1.03, Range: 1-5). Most organizations, although still less than half, reported being unaware of funding proposals in the community (*n* = 28, 37.8%),

Northeast. Most organizations had awareness of community resources for resettlement efforts of Syrian refugees (*n* = 15, 68.2%). Half reported that current efforts are funded publicly (*n* = 11, 50%) and privately (*n* = 10, 45.5%). Almost half did not know whether currently funded efforts would continue (*n* = 6, 27.3%). Availability of "many" volunteers (*n* = 9, 40.9%) and "some" financial donations (*n* = 9, 40.9%) were the highest followed by "some" grants (*n* = 7, 31.8%). Availability of "some" physical space (*n* = 5, 22.7%) and experts (*n* = 5, 22.7%) were the lowest. Half the organizations reported that members of the community and leaders would support using resources to address resettlement efforts (*n* = 11, 50%). They also reported that there were no funding opportunities (*n* = 7, 31.8%) or that they were unaware of opportunities (*n* = 4, 22.2%).

South. Almost half the organizations had awareness of available community resources to facilitate resettlement efforts (*n* = 11, 44%). Less than half reported that funding was public (*n* = 9, 36%) and private (*n* = 7, 28%). Almost half acknowledged that currently funded efforts would continue (*n* = 7, 28%). Availability of "many"

volunteers (*n* = 7, 28%), followed by "some" financial donations (*n* = 7, 28%) and physical space (*n* = 7, 28%), was endorsed the highest. Availability of "some" experts (*n* = 6, 24%) and a "few" grants (*n* = 4, 16%) were endorsed the lowest. Almost half the organizations reported that community members and leaders would support using resources to address resettlement efforts (*n* = 8, 32%). They also reported that funding opportunities were either unavailable (*n* = 8, 32%) or that they were unaware of opportunities (*n* = 4, 16%).

Midwest. More than half the organizations had awareness of available community resources to facilitate resettlement efforts (*n* = 11, 61.1%). Similarly, more than half reported that funding was public (*n* = 10, 55.6%) but less than half reported that it was private (*n* = 7, 38.9%). Almost half (*n* = 6, 33.3%) reported that current funding would continue. Availability of "some" grants (*n* = 7, 38.9%) and physical space (*n* = 6, 33.3%) were endorsed the highest. Availability of "some" financial donations (*n* = 4, 22.2%) and volunteers (*n* = 4, 22.2%), followed by a "few" experts (*n* = 4, 22.2%), were endorsed the lowest. Almost half (*n* = 8, 44.4%) also reported that members of the community and leaders would support using resources to address resettlement efforts. More than half acknowledged being unaware of funding opportunities (*n* = 11, 61.1%).

West. Less than half the organizations had awareness of available resources to facilitate resettlement efforts (*n* = 2, 22.2%). Less than half reported that funding was public (*n* = 4, 44.4%) and private (*n* = 4, 44.4%). Similarly, less than half reported that current funding would continue (*n* = 4, 44.4%). Availability of "many" volunteers (*n* = 2, 22.2%) and financial donations (*n* = 2, 22.2%), in addition to "some" space (*n* = 2, 22.2%) and a "few" experts (*n* = 2, 22.2%), were endorsed the highest. Availability of

grants, which ranged from "few" and "some" to "many" and "most," was evenly distributed but endorsed the lowest (*n* = 1, 11.1%). Almost half the organizations reported community members and leaders would support using resources for resettlement efforts (*n* = 4, 44.4%). Organizations also acknowledged that funding was either unavailable (*n* = 2, 22.2%) or that they were unaware of opportunities (*n* = 1, 11.1%).

Second Aim: Resettlement Experience of Syrian Refugees

Data analysis yielded 11 themes (see Figure 15) and 34 sub-themes (see Figure 16). De-identified quotes from participants are provided when applicable to illustrate their experience across each stage of resettlement (i.e., pre-resettlement, resettlement/ migration, and post-resettlement/adjustment). Illustrative quotes may not adhere to American-English rules of grammar or sentence structure because they are direct transcriptions. Participant response frequencies are presented in five-point Likert categories ranging from "none" for no participants, "few" for 1-3 participants, "some" for 3-6 participants, "many" for 6-9 participants, and "most" for 9-12 participants (Allen & Seaman, 2007). While several themes and sub-themes overlap (i.e., were double-coded), they have different meanings depending on the resettlement stage (e.g., instability and uncertainty refer to different experiences towards the end of pre-resettlement than resettlement/migration).

Findings are presented using the bioecological model because each resettlement stage has a unique context (Bronfenbrenner, 1995; see Table 9). Participant response weights and frequencies are reported vis-à-vis a structure that moves from the "individual" and their "microsystem" (i.e., people and institutions directly interacting with participant) to the "mesosystem" (i.e., interconnections between microsystems),

"exosystem" (i.e., connection between contexts of participant influence and non-influence), and "macrosystem" (i.e., participant's cultural setting). The "chronosystem" (i.e., transitions over time) is also included in this framework to reflect each resettlement stage. Silove, Ventevogel, and Rees (2017) suggest using a bioecological model to explore the refugee experience because it takes into account complexities of resettlement. These include interpersonal relationship dynamics, traumatic experiences, and ongoing stressors.

Since the phenomenological experience of 12 *individuals* was the unit of analysis, each resettlement stage begins with a brief overview of how participants discussed their individual experiences. This is followed by findings across the various eco-systemic levels.

Stage 1: Pre-Resettlement

This resettlement stage is characterized by a shift from safety and stability to instability and uncertainty. Participants described a relatively carefree life with interpersonal relationships and access to resources. But a rise in sociopolitical instability was accompanied by growing uncertainty. The most frequent themes reported during this stage were: a) *nostalgia* (n = 12), b) *dismantled social systems and institutions* (n = 10), c) *instability and uncertainty* (n = 10); d) *interpersonal relationships* (n = 10), and e) *transitions* (n = 10). These themes, along with the accompanying sub-themes, are not independent of each other (e.g., education and employment corresponds to resource availability while safety and stability corresponds to happiness). This means that participants endorsed access to resources because they worked and reported being happy given their experience of safety and stability (see Figure 17).

Bioecological Model

Individual

Fear of consequences, a sub-theme of instability and uncertainty, was reported by some participants (n = 6). It reflects the difficult choices, such as whether and when to leave Syria and betraying family or friends to save themselves, they had to make. Participants weighed choices with the possibility of long-term consequences. Ahmed Shamon explained the challenge of not only choosing to leave Syria but also not knowing how to start over in the United States given his life cycle (i.e., retirement). "Once you leave the country, you are obligated to start from zero. You know, at the time when you were 18-years-old, you start thinking about working, you think about getting married, and you think about building your life," he said. "At the time you have your health, you are still young, and you have energy. And then, when you reach the 50s, it's very difficult to build again."

Rifat Aswad was arbitrarily detained by the police several times for political activism (i.e., video recording protests and government-sanctioned violence). He described being interrogated about accomplices and putting himself at risk to protect his family and friends. "I was in a situation where I either chose to inform them where the person is, which would make me feel like I betrayed him or I could make a decision that costs me a lot," he said.

Helplessness and discomfort is another sub-theme of instability and uncertainty. It was endorsed by some participants (n = 6) and reflects their feelings of helplessness, an inability to influence the current situation, along with, its resulting uncertainty. Therefore, this sub-theme is an extension of the previous sub-theme. Rifat Aswad explained how

public unrest increased considerably after the arbitrary detention and torture of adolescent boys for anti-Regime (i.e., al-Assad) propaganda. “We did not know exactly what happened or why there was this huge madness towards those children,” he said.

As a sub-theme of transitions, *sudden departure* was endorsed by some participants (n = 6). It illustrates how they were unprepared for the unfolding events in Syria. While this reflects a shift within and between ecological systems, it is primarily contained in the individual. Participants were not only happy before everything changed but they also had access to resources. They were employed or pursuing their education and had extended social networks. But more than anything, they had hope about the future and imagined even greater freedoms under the leadership of President Bashar al-Assad.

These expectations and experiences, however, made leaving with little to no advance notice particularly devastating. Marwan Rahal described experiences he and others had. “Everybody in Syria, before everything happened, was so happy,” he said, “Trust me. They were feeling good before the war.” Alaa Said, who was 15-years-old at the time, never expected how drastically his life would change. “I was a student. I didn’t like recognize or realize I will leave Syria,” he said. “The war forced us to move.”

Happiness is a sub-theme of nostalgia endorsed by some participants (n = 6). As an individual quality, it cuts across ecological systems and represents balance. Reasons for happiness reported by participants are embodied by other sub-themes (i.e., education and employment, resource availability, safety and stability). Participants who did not endorse happiness were not necessarily unhappy but focused more on specific aspects of life satisfaction. Nooda Tuma said, “We visited my family, the family of my husband.

And they had a farm and pool. We were very happy. We got together as a family and we were very happy." "Prior to the incident, the events, my husband had a taxi," remarked Asil Wasem, "would go out, work, and come back. And really, honestly, it was really nice life."

Microsystem

Helplessness and discomfort is also contained in the microsystem ecology because it reflects how participants perceived loss of influence over their immediate ecological system (e.g., work, school, and friends). Rasha Haik described that a yearning for justice led to considerable instability because people, many of whom were hoping for a revolution much like in Tunisia and Egypt, were unprepared. "I was just...I do not think people were ready," she said. "Because to have a revolution, in my opinion, you have to have a vision of what you want the country to be."

Support to/from family and friends, a sub-theme of interpersonal relationships, was endorsed by most participants (n = 10). It reflects the importance of interpersonal relationships, including personal and professional social networks. Nooda Tuma frequently visited her family while her husband was at work. "There were many times where there would be, um...where he would be work," she said. "And we would actually go to either our sister's or another place." Firas Harb enjoyed socializing and going out with friends. "I used to go out with my friends," he said, "We went out and had a really good time." Rifat Aswad began to expand his professional network after joining the family-owned business. "When I started working," he said, "I started knowing people in really high positions."

Mesosystem

Safety and stability is a sub-theme of nostalgia that many participants (*n* = 7) endorsed. It describes how they felt safe despite occasional government-sanctioned violence and enjoyed stability as a result thereof. To that end, this sub-theme represents the interaction between ecological systems over which participants had influence (i.e., immediate surroundings) and those they had little to no influence over (e.g., national politics). Government-sanctioned violence, which is discussed in more detail later and corresponds to another stage of resettlement (i.e., migration/resettlement), includes arbitrary detention and interrogation. "Before the war, it was like, uh...secure place, were safe," said Mohammad Said, "We were stable [and] feeling very, very good." Rasha Haik remarked, "It was a very safe city. You could travel. There were no restrictions on how you live your life beyond talking politics. You removed the piece of politically active, you could basically do anything and no one would interfere with you."

Exosystem

Education and employment is a sub-theme that was endorsed by most participants (*n* = 11). It highlights not only the value they placed on education but also employment and productivity. "If I...to attend courses at the university, I would go in the morning," said Rifat Aswad, "When I finished university, I go back to my office and work." Mohammad Said remarked, "Before the war...we had, like, big farm. Working that farm a lot." *Resource availability*, a sub-theme endorsed by many participants (*n* = 8), illustrates access to resources before sociopolitical instability and subsequent displacement.

Participants were not concerned about their basic needs and some even had access to luxuries available in Western countries. "I owned my own house," said Ahmad

Shamon, “I had my job that was stable, and I had a car.” Firas Harb remarked, “We were very comfortable. There were no problems with finances because everything was...our work was fine and good. Everything was very, um...easy, whether to see a doctor or insurance or anything else because we spoke the same language.”

Fear of consequences is a sub-theme of instability and uncertainty. It also contained in the exosystem ecology but represents the dynamic interaction between all systems and the fear participants had of making wrong choices with devastating consequences. As a sub-theme of transitions, *knowledge of United States* was endorsed by some participants ($n = 6$). Aside from two participants with family abroad, it reflects the cultural attitudes of the west in Syria. These attitudes were primarily exhibited by friends, co-workers or classmates, and the media. Because they were generally satisfied with their lives, and thus did not expect becoming displaced, participants had no reason to learn about the United States. Their knowledge was generally limited to media portrayals and stereotypes perpetuated by the al-Assad regime.

Joram Bitar had no knowledge about the United States aside from its military dominance, “All I [know]...is that the United States is a big country. It’s a military, largest military power in the world.” Ahmed Shamon attributed his knowledge – or lack thereof – about the United States to its strained diplomatic relationship with Syria. “I didn’t know anything,” he said. “Why? Between Syria and America, there no relationship.” Rasha Haik, whose brother was completing his medical residency in the United States, confirmed this sentiment. But her positive feelings about the United States were not shared by others. “Part of my family were already in the United States [and] so I...I knew that for me the United States was a place where you go and your study and you

have freedom," she said. "And it's an amazing place where you can travel and you have music...um, but at the same time, growing up in Syria, the United States was the enemy."

Macrosystem

As a sub-theme of dismantled social systems and institutions, *unregulated laws and policies* was endorsed by some participants (n = 5). It describes the emergence of progressive laws and policies in Syria following the transfer of power from Hafez to Bashar al-Assad. Rasha Haik described how an increase of access to media (e.g., Internet) and commerce made people more optimistic about the future. "Bashar was more liberal than his dad," she said, "You started seeing private ownership of companies. You started having cellphones. You started having satellite and, um...you started having private universities in the country."

Chronosystem

Power and corruption, a sub-theme of dismantled social systems and institutions, was also endorsed by some participants (n = 5). It reflects how the sociopolitical climate in Syria was defined by government corruption and a false sense of security despite an increase in liberties. As such, this sub-theme represents change in the sociopolitical landscape over time as illustrated by the transition of power from Hafez al-Assad to his son, Bashar al-Assad.

Threats to safety and stability is also contained in the chronosystem because it represents transition of power and growing sociopolitical instability. This sub-theme provides the context for other sub-themes (i.e., primarily education and employment, availability of resources, and happiness). "What happened people of Syria...they have been kind of like choked, suffocated, from the same family for 44-years," said Ahmed

Shamon. “It is the father and the father’s son.” Joram Bitar described how the situation in Syria was grounded in government corruption and its unrealistic portrayal of President al-Assad. “This person [Bashar al-Assad] was someone who does not make a mistake,” he said. “You are...as long as you stay away from this guy, you are fine.”

Stage 2: Resettlement/Migration

A defining characteristic of this stage is leaving everything behind in searching for safety and stability. Participants experienced considerable instability and uncertainty after being suddenly uprooted. This was compounded by unexpected transitions, whether leaving the country or being forced to make decisions without knowing their consequences. They described disregarding immediate challenges in order to escape from violence and oppression. The most frequent themes endorsed during resettlement/ migration were: a) *instability and uncertainty* (*n* = 12), b) *transitions* (*n* = 12), c) *war* (*n* = 12), d) *interpersonal relationships* (*n* = 12), e) *second chances* (*n* = 12), and f) *health concerns* (*n* = 12). As with the previous stage, themes and sub-themes were not independent of each other; interpersonal relationships were often associated with second chances or health concerns directly affected by war-related displacement (see Figure 18).

Bioecological Model

Individual

Helplessness and discomfort, a sub-theme of instability and uncertainty, was found in the narratives of most participants (*n* = 12). It reflects uncertainty from displacement by a sudden increase in violence. Marwan Rahal described the sudden emergence of problems, “It...so bad. There a lot of problems. It’s terrible.” Alaa Said, who was barely an adolescent when his family left Syria, remembers how he felt. “The

situation...hard for me. I remember that situation exactly," he said. Participants also described being uncomfortable leaving everything behind while relying on family, friends, and sometimes strangers. Ahmed Shamon, like many other participants, was hopeful of the violence ending. He stayed with friends and family in Syria until the only solution left was to leave. "You don't have a choice. You have to...you have to leave Syria. It's a decision that has to be made and that's mandatory. That's the first [thought], that you don't have a choice," he said. "And the second thought is, go where?"

Regret and doubt is another sub-theme of instability and uncertainty. It was endorsed by many participants (n = 7) and represents remorse over leaving Syria. Joram Bitar left Damascus to seek help from the Free Syrian Army in Daraa but quickly regretted his decision. "I left in a car from Damascus to Daraa. And in Daraa, there is the free army. Honestly, when I got to Daraa, I regretted it," he explained, "Seriously. They took my wife and other women in an area and they put me with other men on the other side." Mais Deeb convinced her father to apply for a tourist visa to the United States, which he quickly regretted in fear of being denied. "I mean, they didn't give it to people right now, especially to Syrians. But he really, he...he applied and regretted that decision then, I remember. He said like, 'Why would I pay for something that's not going to happen?'," she said.

Fear of consequences, also a sub-theme of instability and uncertainty, was endorsed by many participants (n = 7). It reflects their feelings of making decisions with limited to no information. To that end, it is an extension of the previous sub-themes. Participants knew that even well-intended decisions could have undesirable and irreversible consequences. This was especially prevalent for participants who took

responsibility for the wellbeing of their family without adequate preparation. Rifat Aswad's father was arbitrarily detained and subsequently disappeared without notice. This prompted him to take a leadership role in the family. "And so, I started discovering that I'm only responsible for my family. My brother...unable to actually do things on his own, take care of his family by himself. My sister is the same thing, she has kids," he said.

Relentless fear is a sub-theme of war endorsed by some participants (n = 6). It describes fear originating from injury and death – sub-themes in the mesosystem ecology – and defined experiences. Participants reported fear of becoming targets for violence or family separation. The former includes the secret police, rebel groups, or prejudicial people in both Syria and other countries. Mais Deeb was afraid that being separated from her father would make her more susceptible to violence. "A lot of bad things could happen to you," she said. "Our father being away from us, I mean that really meant a lot for us." Nooda Tuma, on the other hand, was afraid of separation from her husband and children. "I was afraid of being detained. Because I was so scared about get...getting detained that my husband would be somewhere and my children somewhere else," she said.

Anxiety, a sub-theme of health concerns, was endorsed by many participants (n = 9). It reflects an increase in their anxiety symptoms after displacement. Some participants attributed these symptoms to circumstances, such as the living situation and uncertainty about the future. Others were unsure of the cause although they indirectly acknowledged that it could be due to their circumstances. Maan Ganim and his family rented an apartment in Jordan. Although physically safe, they did not let their children play in the

apartment in fear of upsetting the neighbors, “This made it some stressful for me. It made us, like, uh...anxious little bit.”

Rasha Haik remembered how much her father loved Syria and, because of the incessant violence tearing the country apart, suffered a stroke. “Um...my dad had a brain stroke...um...two years into the war because,” she said, “basically, kind of, brain couldn’t handle that the country was on fire.” Mais Deeb began to experience severe stomach pain shortly after leaving Syria. She never had such problems before and was unable to determine the cause, which appears to be anxiety-induced. “But when we left for Egypt, it got worse. In Turkey, it was really bad,” she said. “I’ve been to doctors and they give me just a lot of medicine to take and I don’t like that.” Rifat Aswad became sick for what seemed like an entire year because of ongoing stress. “I was actually sick for a whole year. I couldn’t get better,” he said, “There was a doctor I went to who said, ‘I’m giving you medication and you’re not getting better’.”

Physical complaints is another sub-theme of health concerns endorsed by some participants ($n = 6$). Physical problems emerged after displacement but never or rarely before. Complaints include those present before displacement but exacerbated as a result thereof. Nooda Tuma panicked when her daughter’s health suddenly deteriorated. She reached out to a Syrian-speaking physician over the Internet because she could not take her daughter to the hospital. “So there was – actually she...her face was so pale – she had, was...a lot of diarrhea and a lot of, um...diarrhea,” she said. “And there was times where she lost her consciousness. There was a doctor that was on the net and some, and he would be...people asked him questions of things.” Mais Deeb was concerned about her mother’s health because she became critically ill with no prior history of problems. “She

was going to...to the hospital, she'd been going to the hospital for a long time when we got to Turkey," she explained.

Hopes and dreams is a sub-theme of second chances. It was endorsed by most participants (n = 8) and emerged after years of instability and uncertainty. Participants were surprised to find out about being granted admission to the United States. Maan Ganim described his wife's reaction when she found out they were approved. "It was not secure in Jordan. We, we...the kids, they didn't go to school, uh...they didn't go to school," he said. "But she was so, so happy...about, uh...when they were moving to the United States; all the kids would go back to school." Asil Wasem reported similar sentiments for her children when she found out about being offered admission, "My expectations...to have a good future for my children and to treat my son. And for my kids to go to school." Marwan Rahal was beginning to feel disappointed after years of waiting for help. "Before that I was thinking, for four years, but I was feeling disappointed...about no help. 'I can't go to the United States'," he said. "It was like a dream for me to come here."

Gratitude is another sub-theme of second chances endorsed by many participants (n = 8). They reported losing hope for lasting stability when they unexpectedly received approval. It expands on the previous sub-theme insofar as participants lost hope of ever regaining safety and stability (i.e., they never imagined being displaced from their homes in Syria). Participants also never considered having to seek asylum in another country. The absence of an international response to the crisis further weakened their resolve. Mais Deeb, who was separated from her father, described newfound hope after being offered admission to the United States. "It was a relief because I...that everything was

going to change really soon," she said. "So, it was really a relief." Mohammad Said was grateful for being offered admission to the United States because it represented opportunity. "Was happy about that, that decision, uh...to go to the United States uh...because I...I felt like it's the best place for us to find whatever we need," he said.

Microsystem

Family separation and reunification is a sub-theme of instability and uncertainty endorsed by most participants (n = 10). It reflects how they had to abandon family, which is discussed in more detail below, to search for safety and stability. Participants acted as scouts gathering information while putting themselves at risk. But this was not isolated to men leaving their women insofar as women also left men. With exception of one participant whose father was killed, which he did not discover until after arriving to the United States, family reunification often occurred within months. Other times reunification would take several years if participants were approved for a tourist visa and had to apply for family reunification after arriving.

Firas Harb unsuccessfully tried to locate his father, who was arbitrarily detained in Syria, while living in Jordan. "A whole year we tried, two years here we tried, and nothing happened," he said. "For three years we asked and told people but nothing happened." Participants also did not expect, and were thus unprepared, for being separated from family. Rasha Haik was in a particularly difficult situation. She was visiting her brother in the United States when the situation in Syria reached a critical point. Rasha was unable to return because of her previous political activism but also did not want to be separated from her family. "Now you have family in war, um...you have family here in Syria trying to support themselves," she explained. "But then all of that...it

was unclear what the next step for me would be even though I knew what I wanted it to be."

Perceived abandonment, also a sub-theme of instability and uncertainty, was endorsed by many participants (n = 7). They described how searching for safety and stability often required leaving family behind. But participants considered leaving their immediate and extended family as abandonment irrespective of reason. Asil Wasem described being separated from her immediate family, mother and father, to whom she had been close. "So, I never actually was away from my family so when I was with my mother there in...in Jordan, she never anticipated that I would be leaving, leaving her there or leave them there," she said. Firas Harb, whose wife divorced him after being denied a tourist visa to the United States, blamed himself for abandoning their children, "I abandoned them and left just like their mother abandoned them and left.

Importance of remaining in contact was a sub-theme of interpersonal relationships endorsed by many participants (n = 9). It provides context to the previous sub-themes by emphasizing the importance of remaining in contact with family despite being separated. Ahmed Shamon remained actively involved in his children's lives after leaving them to seek asylum in the United States. He followed their academic progress, which was frequently interrupted by sociopolitical instability in Egypt, and provided encouragement. "While I was here, I was actually closely following their attendance," he said. "And so I noticed that they were very successful and progressing well."

Given the importance of collectivist values in Syria, this sub-theme also represented joint decision making about resettlement. Rasha Haik made the decision to visit her brother, and subsequently remain in the United States, with input from her

parents. “There isn’t ‘my decisions,’ there are ‘our decisions’,” she said. Maan Ganim also invoked input from his family in the decision to leave Syria, “Yeah, all of us. We, uh...like made kind of a meeting and we decided to go.”

Knowledge of United States is a sub-theme of transitions. It was endorsed by many participants (n = 7) and, unlike in the previous or subsequent resettlement stage, describes how they chose the resettlement destination. Rifat Aswad chose the United States over a country in Europe, such as England or France, because it represented hope. “I started actually telling myself that America is a place where you can find a job, opportunity, and become established again,” he said. Joram Bitar also chose the United States but because it represented hope for his children. “The biggest reason, honestly, is the children,” he said. “They will learn and perhaps become doctors.”

Mesosystem

No choices, another a sub-theme of transitions, was endorsed by some participants (n = 6). It reiterates decreasing options alongside increasing violence and destruction. As such, it describes the motivation behind taking considerable risks for a promise of safety and stability. Participants began to consider dangerous propositions, such as paying criminals to traffic them across borders, because its likelihood of success seemed higher than being approved for a tourist visa to the United States.

Rifat Aswad explained how a friend applied for a tourist visa and was denied four times. “It was a crazy mess. I decided to take my family on a boat to Europe. The amount would have cost us 150,000 USD,” he said. Maan Ganim had a similar experience regarding limited resettlement options. They were offered an opportunity for asylum in the United States after waiting two years with no other alternatives. Maan also had no

time to evaluate the United States as a viable resettlement destination given the insurmountable number of applications. “Yes, the fastest decision because no more options,” he said. “Just the United States.”

Support from/to family and friends is another a sub-theme of interpersonal relationships. It was endorsed by most participants (n = 12) and represents their shift of focus from professional to personal (i.e., family and friends) relationships. The reason being, as previously discussed, that participants never knew whether they would be reunited with family. Participants also reported becoming more dependent on their family (e.g., children, spouse, or parent) after leaving Syria. Mais Deeb supported her mother and siblings after their father left to the United States. She described concern for her younger brother being exposed to deviant peers at school in Egypt, “I mean, kids over there have drugs everywhere um...they smoke, they do bad stuff, so I was really worried about my brother. I mean, he was alone by himself over there.” Nooda Tuma, on the other hand, relied heavily on her family before and after leaving Syria. “And so, uh...I went to my mom; my mom was actually living in, um...the area of Arihah, the southern,” she said. “[We] also stayed with my paternal uncle for about two months in Jordan.”

Protecting family and friends, also a sub-theme of interpersonal relationships, was endorsed by most participants (n = 10). But unlike the previous sub-theme, it reflects the risks participants took to ensure the safety of family and friends. This ranged from working full-time to accepting age-inappropriate responsibilities and advocating for their right to attend school. Alaa Said worked full-time to support his family because their father was elderly and without formal education. He described their fear of being able to survive without income, “They were so scared and I was thinking about supporting my

father." Nooda Tuma hid challenges she encountered in Turkey from her husband to protect him. "I did not…I did not want to put pressure on my husband because he was away from us and he was also encountering lots of pressure and lots of things," she said. "But I didn't want to make him feel what we were really going through or this pressure."

Exosystem

Waiting for asylum decision was a sub-theme of instability and uncertainty endorsed by most participants (n = 12). It is defined by a determined search for safety inside and outside of Syria. Although this sub-theme has an impact on the individual; feelings and thoughts of participants, it primarily represents the influence of context. To that end, participants reiterated being forced to leave everything behind following an increase in violence and destruction. They left major cities – such as Aleppo, Damascus, and Raqqa – as violence spread across the country.

They also left Syria for nearby countries, such as Jordan and Lebanon, but returned to reunify with family while exploring asylum opportunities. Rifat Aswad never anticipated that peaceful protests would become violent, "This time another feeling was added to my feelings. It is not true that nothing you think would happy, would not happen." Maan Ganim left Syria and lived in Jordan with his family, wife and children. But their lives in Jordan were not much better than in Syria so he began to explore asylum in the United States. "That was, uh...life in Jordan; stable but not that much," he said. "Then we tried to contact with some people who, uh...traveled before us."

Unexpected events, another sub-theme of transitions, was endorsed by most participants (n = 10). It reflects unanticipated changes or transitions that imposed various restrictions on participants. They were surprised and grateful for being granted admission

to the United States because it represented safety and stability. Participants never expected encountering as many bureaucratic challenges as they did before and after arriving. Marwan Rahal was at the airport in Lebanon preparing to board a flight to Germany when he was stopped by a border agent. The agent refused to let Marwan board the flight on grounds of an approaching three-month passport expiration date:

> "They didn't allow me to ride that flight [so] the United States embassy in Beirut contacted the German government about that issue. Then they were asking me about, suddenly, questions like, 'What's your mother's name?' and 'What's your father's name?' [Then] they allowed me to board that flight after one hour."

Mais Deeb encountered similar challenges in Turkey. They were approved for family reunification at the United States embassy and told that their passports would arrive separately.

Several weeks later, Mais received an e-mail that cast doubt on her step-brother's application. "When I was checking the status of our visa, it was saying that it was pending. And then I received an e-mail saying that my brother was rejected but that they accepted him now," she said. Mais also had to obtain travel permission from the Turkish government before their departure. This was not as challenging as they anticipated but nonetheless an unexpected barrier to resettlement. "We had to get travel permission from the Turkish government," she explained. "And yeah...the woman that did it for us was really nice."

Unmet expectations was a sub-theme of instability and uncertainty endorsed by many participants ($n = 9$). It represents their experience – defined by differences between expectations and reality – after leaving Syria but before coming to the United States. These include challenges associated with accomplishing standard tasks such as

registering for school in Egypt or continuous housing transitions in Jordan. Participants left with minimal expectations of safety and stability. But even those expectations were shattered, leaving them with little else but uncertainty.

Mais Deeb left Syria with her parents and moved to Egypt. They tried to register her in a nearby high school, which was approved by the principal, only to be denied by the administration. “So, when me and my mom went to the, uh...Education Department and gave them all our paperwork, they said that the school [was] full,” according to Mais. “I told them that the principal said that we [could] go there and they called him and he said, ‘No, I did not tell them that’.” Asil Wasem left Syria and lived in Jordan for several months with her husband and their children. They planned to live in Jordan, with expectations of relative stability, until the violence in Syria decreased. “So, we were living a really simple life but it was still...we moved from one house to another. We had six houses that we lived in,” she said.

Fear of consequences, a sub-theme of instability and uncertainty, was endorsed by many participants ($n = 7$). It is an extension of *helplessness and discomfort* contained in the individual but represents apprehension in the exosystem ecology. Participants accepted their situation and committed to following through with their decisions despite potential consequences. Ahmed Shamon described fear of being denied a tourist visa to the United States, because of what it would mean for his family, but applying anyway. “So, once I started I said, ‘Okay, I will continue this path no matter what the consequences are’,” he said.

Macrosystem

Sudden departure is a sub-theme of transitions endorsed by most participants (*n* = 10). It represents the shift from stability to instability in the previous systems and reflects the sudden departure from Syria or another country before coming to the United States. Participants explained how their lives were interrupted without notice and they had to make decisions with limited information. This includes temporarily staying with family or friends in another part of Syria, leaving the country with hopes of returning, or applying for a tourist visa to the United States. They began exploring resettlement destinations and tourist visa opportunities, the latter being a means to asylum, after exhausting other options. This process was defined by instability and uncertainty. But once they identified the United States as a suitable and prospective destination, the process was unexpectedly quick.

Rifat Aswad, like many other Syrians, had doubt of being approved for a tourist visa. He scheduled an interview appointment at the embassy in Egypt and received approval before leaving. "I was actually shocked a little bit," he said, 'For certain this person [the ambassador] is not joking.' I asked him, 'Did you give me a visa? Did you approve me?' He said, 'Yes'." Marwan Rahal had a similar experience. He was working for a wealthy family from the United States in Lebanon who convinced him to apply for a visa. Marwan also had doubt of being approved but, much to his surprise, was granted the request. "Three months later I got a response from the telephone. They said, 'Your paperwork transferred to the United States'," he explained. "They promised me that I will get everything in three months."

Resettlement motivation is another sub-theme of transitions endorsed by most participants (*n* = 8). It elaborates their reasons for accepting considerable risks to leave

Syria or another country. Participants explained their limited choices, which was discussed in more detail previously, and desire for safety. Their concern and desire were primarily directed at family instead of themselves. This captures the beginning of drastic and unimaginable changes (i.e., resettlement). In the mesosystem ecology, participants described their reasons for taking considerable risks in searching for safety and stability. This was different from the macrosystem ecology insofar as they reported a desire of returning to Syria before being left with no other choices except resettlement.

Rifat Aswad described being motivated to leave Syria after the regime froze his assets, which were considerable before the conflict. “Right at that moment I decided there was no reason for me to stay. I took my family; my mother and my younger sister...went into the borders” he said. This decision was not as necessarily motivated by assets but the restriction of freedom it represented. Participants also described being motivated to leave by the infrastructure collapse in Syria (e.g., utilities and healthcare). Mohammad Said remarked this sentiment directly. “Was nothing after the, uh...the war,” he said. Nooda Tuma, on the other hand, explained her motivation in more detail. “So, there were times when there were fights,” she said. “And there would be no phone, no electricity...no communication. So, things had gotten to be, um...worse and worse in the heart of Damascus.”

Knowledge of United States, another sub-theme of transitions endorsed by many participants (n = 7), reflects broader societal views in Syria and the Middle East at the macrosystem ecology. Aside from four participants with family or friends abroad, as noted earlier, most reported that their information was limited to negative media

portrayals. At the same time, participants acknowledged that such portrayals were an attempt by the regime in Syria to shape public perception.

Rasha Haik, who was one of the four participants with family abroad, described how the United States was generally viewed in Syria. “They were Zionists, they were supporters of Israel...Israel is our enemy. I mean, they still occupy Southern Gaza – Golan Heights – um...even in 2006 we had the...well they had the war with Lebanon but then we ended up having a lot of the refugees from Lebanon,” she said. “Um...so it was almost that it’s this horrible place where capitalism, where people don’t care about anyone else but money. Um...they want control in the Middle East and they’re the enemy.” Asil Wasem was dissatisfied with the information she received from friends and tried to learn more by watching videos on the Internet. “So, what happened [was] that I tried to watch a video...or tried to be, you know, on the internet,” she explained. “Or sometimes I watched a video that taught English or something.”

Arbitrary detention was a sub-theme of war endorsed by many participants (*n* = 8). It reflects how they witnessed, and sometimes experienced, unimaginable violence in Syria or another country (e.g., Jordan). Rasha Haik explained the likelihood of being arbitrarily detained for political activism in Syria, “I’m not saying that they would kill you, but you might be interrogated. You might be whatever, so it’s not yeah.” Maan Ganim described being arrested and arbitrarily detained in Jordan for working without a permit. “I sacrificed work. Then...uh...got arrested from the government. The second day I went to go by someone and ask about being released,” he said. Maan further explained being threatened of deportation to Syria if caught working with a permit again. “A

few...there was a warning about that. 'If you, uh...work again we will, uh...like tell you to go back home...to Syria."

Injury and death, another sub-theme of war, was also endorsed by many participants (n = 8). It reflects how the sociopolitical climate in Syria degenerated over time, which is discussed in more detail later, from peaceful protests demanding more freedom to government-sanctioned restrictions and subsequently violence. Rasha Haik did not directly experience violence. But she had many friends who were arbitrarily detained, kidnapped, and tortured by the secret police in Syria for suspected political activism. "[A lot] of my friends were either kidnapped or killed or had to flee the country because they were activists," she said. Rasha further described how her best friend, a grade school teacher, was kidnapped by extremists but subsequently released. "My, um...best friend...was kidnapped," she said. "Thankfully nothing happened but, I mean rape issues or whatever, other harm that could've happened – happened to her."

Firas Harb not only witnessed injury and death but was also subjected to violence. He described the stench of bodies carelessly thrown to the curb. "A person died, they don't take them right away. They leave him for a day or two so the smell is just...really bad." Rifat also described being detained and beaten the first of many times for suspected political activism. "At the time they detained me, they put me inside," he said. "They beat me a lot. And they told me, 'We want the names of the people.' I told them, 'I don't know anyone'."

Chronosystem

Long journey is a sub-theme of transitions endorsed by many participants (n = 9).

They described leaving everything behind in Syria and living in another country, although often two or more countries, before coming to the United States. This theme reflects various transitions participants experienced over a relatively short period of time. Joram Bitar was separated from his family in- and outside- of Syria. They were also detained in Jordan, stripped of their identification documents, and taken to the Zaatari Refugee Camp. Joram and his family left without permission after a few days because the living conditions were dismal. But even then, he could not decide whether to apply for asylum to the United States. "It took a long time to decide or to not decide," he said. "What it is...is that you...the interviews that you have to have between one interview to another could take three months or four months."

Firas Harb was separated from his family and wanted by the secret police in Syria. This meant that he would have to risk being killed to see his family. Firas left his mother and cousin, who were accompanying him, after noticing the Syrian border guard looking at the computer screen attentively. His mother bribed the border guard to release his passport and paid a Lebanese chauffer, who worked for the Syrian regime, to drive him across the border. "And then we left," he said. "I told him, 'Okay. You will pass the area where the border is and wait for me, after the Lebanese border. Wait for me after that border'." Firas successfully crossed into Syria, retrieved his children, and returned to Lebanon with the chauffer's help.

Stage 3: Post-Resettlement/Adjustment

Arriving to the resettlement destination and navigating various legal processes, such as asylum or family reunification, is a defining characteristic of post-resettlement/adjustment. The most frequent themes endorsed by participants were: a)

second chances (*n* = 12), b) *resettlement challenges* (*n* = 12), c) *dismantled social systems and institutions* (*n* = 12), d) *instability and uncertainty* (*n* = 11), e) *health concerns* (*n* = 11), and f) *transitions* (*n* = 11). Similar to the previous stages of resettlement, themes and sub-themes were not independent of each other (e.g., interpersonal relationships were often associated with second chances or health concerns directly affected by war-related displacement; see Figure 19).

Bioecological Model

Individual

Helplessness and discomfort is a sub-theme of instability and uncertainty endorsed by most participants (*n* = 11). It reflects feelings of doubt, although different from those reported in the previous resettlement stages, associated with adjusting to life in the United States. Rifat Aswad felt lonely and helpless in making progress with adjustment. This prompted him to question coming to Minnesota. “Why didn’t I go to California? So many people there,” he said. “Why didn’t I go to Illinois? I know a lot of people there who could have helped me.” Joram Bitar encountered several challenges associated with adjusting to life in the United States, “Thousands of how, how, how.” Ahmed Shamon grappled with rebuilding his life in the United States given limited access to basic resources or youth. “So, when you are young it’s easy for you to re-establish again or work hard to do things,” he said. “And so at the time, when you start from zero, it’s okay.”

Anxiety, a sub-theme of health concerns, was endorsed by many participants (*n* = 8). It represents disregard of anxiety symptoms associated with displacement and resettlement to accomplish goals. Participants reported anxiety, whether directly by name

or indirectly through symptoms, after coming to the United States. Symptoms included a heightened startle response and intrusive thoughts. Both were triggered by seeing police or other government officials.

Rifat Aswad, who was arbitrarily detained and interrogated in Syria multiple times, had to remind himself of being safe in the United States. “It was so difficult for me to say, ‘Calm down, there’s nothing’,” he said. “Now I tell myself, ‘Is it possible, is it true that Syrian police would contact this police officer and say, ‘Capture him for me?’” Participants were also anxious about surviving in the United States given their resettlement challenges. Ahmed Shamon wanted to be self-sufficient but felt unprepared to meet all basic needs. “So many expenses to the point where you have to think about work, you have to think about expenses; expenses this, expenses that,” he said, “and sometimes it’s even thinking about these expenses, writing them down...gives you a headache.”

As another sub-theme of health concerns, *depression or sadness* was endorsed by many participants (n = 7). They described depression directly by name and attributed its symptoms to being separated from family. At least two participants endorsed conflicting feelings between being granted admission to the United States; including the promise of a better future, and abandoning their family overseas. Rifat Aswad began to doubt his resettlement decision after arriving to the United States, which then made him sad. “Me and my family had stayed in a hotel for three months when I came to Minnesota,” he said. “Defiance is bigger and the sadness is bigger.”

Marwan Rahal expressed similar sentiments with an emphasis on being separated from his mother and father, “Before I left...before I left Lebanon...my mother and father

met me. This was the last time that I saw them." Sadness from separation, in turn, had an impact on his ability to focus on securing employment or learning English. Rasha Haik, on the other hand, had conflicting feelings of gratitude and sadness. She was grateful for being safe in the United States but sad for not having seen her father before his unexpected death. "Um...and I haven't seen him since I left the country," she said. "Um...and I think the saddest thing was that I wasn't able to [silent] leave though I'm here legally."

Intrusive or racing thoughts, also a sub-theme of health, was endorsed by many participants (n = 7). It is an extension of the previous sub-themes insofar as participants oscillated between anxiety and depression or intrusive thoughts. As previously discussed, their anxiety was primarily due to fear over growing expenses (e.g., rent and food). Ahmed Shamon reiterated concern with earning enough not only to support himself but also his wife and children after their arrival. "So many expenses to the point where you have to think about work; you have to think about expenses, expenses this...expenses that," he said. "And sometimes it's even thinking about these expenses, writing them down...gives you a headache." As previously noted, this illustrative quote also reflects other sub-themes (i.e., anxiety and intrusive or racing thoughts).

Firas Harb experienced intrusive thoughts of pervasive and compounding losses. These include the divorce from his wife; and her subsequent re-marriage, separation from their children, and learning about his father's death. "Here in America, I stay in apartment. Every day I'm thinking about my children. Sometimes I don't want to talk to them a lot. I really cannot look them in the eyes," explained Firas. "I miss them a lot. It's

been two years and four months and nothing has happened. My wife, who used to be my wife, got married about two years ago."

Gratitude is a sub-theme of second chances. It was endorsed by most participants (n = 11) and reflects their appreciation for an opportunity to resume life in the United States without government interference. Mohammad Said viewed coming to the United States as an unattainable dream even before becoming displaced. Access to resources, such as education and healthcare, are primary reasons for his perspective. "We feel comfortable here because the, uh...health system and education," he said. "I would selected the United States without anything."

Maan Ganim, on the other hand, became more comfortable after coming to the United States. "I had like, uh...crowded mind about the future. But when I arrived here I got excited," he said. Rifat Aswad was grateful for being offered admission to the United States despite subsequent resettlement challenges. "This country, no matter how much I went through, the difficulties I went through, I still thank the country," he said. "I'm hoping that I will not encounter any problems throughout my life here. I'm hoping that I will be an active producer in this country." Marwan Rahal expressed similar sentiments, "The best time for me was when I arrived here. I will do something nobody did before, promise."

Microsystem

Finding housing is a sub-theme of resettlement challenges endorsed by many participants (n = 8). It reflects frustration with identifying housing options after arriving to the United States. Participants appreciated challenges associated with resettlement. But they could not understand, and for legitimate reasons, why affiliates did not secure

housing before their arrival. They also reported a desire to find safer housing options than those provided by resettlement affiliates.

Joram Bitar and his family were resettled to a hotel for weeks before an apartment was ready. “When we were staying in the hotel, you know...thinking we would stay there for two days or three days,” he said. “We were getting one thing out of the suitcase at the time.” Participants with large families, typically three or more children, also reported being separated into different apartments. Irrespective of whether these apartments were adjacent to each other, it evoked different feelings in participants because they were expecting stability. “I spoke out and said, ‘I have to talk to...with the, uh...boss of the, this organization. If this is the law, I will go back to my home’,” said Maan Ganim.

As another sub-theme of resettlement challenges, *finding education and employment* was endorsed by some participants ($n = 6$). It reflects the challenges associated with securing employment, primarily a language barrier and inability to transfer skills learned in Syria, but also pursuing an education. Younger participants worked full-time while going to school or saving money for college. They explained being torn between pursuing their dreams while supporting family in the United States or abroad. Older participants, on the other hand, had more difficulties finding employment. They attributed this to being older, uneducated, and/or not speaking English. Of all participants, 50% were employed full-time ($n = 6$). The remaining participants were either employed part-time (16.7%, $n = 2$) or unemployed (33.3%, $n = 4$).

Ahmed Shamon was a professional athlete turned coach in Syria but, because he spoke little to no English, had to work in a warehouse. “When you work in this country, you don’t have a language and the country...you don’t know much yet,” he said. “How

can you imagine yourself working?" Mohammad Said was elderly, did not speak English, and only completed grammar school in Syria. This made him concerned about not only securing employment but also being able to pay rent for two apartments after expiration of the time-limited government assistance. "Uh...job you have to find yourself," he said. "Otherwise there will be no more income for you."

With exception of two participants in college and graduate school, 16.7% (n = 7) were in college before being displaced. The remaining participants graduated from high school (41.7%, n = 5) or grammar school (25%, n = 3). Although responsible for financially supporting their parents and siblings, participants wanted to resume their education in the United States. Alaa Said enjoyed going to school in Syria and studying mathematics. But as the oldest child and only male in a family of eight, he is unable to resume his education in the United States while supporting his family.

Marwan Rahal works full-time as a cashier at a carwash, in addition to, a security guard at his host family's franchise car dealership. He is determined to save enough money to resume his education. "I would like to continue my education but I have to save a lot of money," he explained. "I'm living with this family and I don't pay any rent. This is a good opportunity to collect more money. I would like to study very, very high." Mais Deeb, who has been in the United States less than six months, speaks nearly fluent English. She was enrolled in a large nearby public university and eager to attend a summer camp for undergraduates interested in pursuing a career in medicine.

Sudden departure is a sub-theme of transitions endorsed by many participants (n = 6). It describes how their basic needs, such as housing and education, were unmet in the United States. This was not only frustrating but reminded participants of the instability

after leaving Syria or another country. Joram Bitar's resettlement motivation was stability defined by secure housing and not having to move. "The first thought that came into my mind is that I want to, I want to...stability," he said. "And I want a place to live because I came here and I was convinced to come here." Marwan Rahal was surprised with not receiving promised assistance; or for that matter, perceived a lack of concern for his needs. "I was surprised that I had to work and nobody took care about my education," he said.

Another sub-theme of transitions is *unexpected events.* It was endorsed by many participants (n = 6) and provides context to the previous sub-theme. Participants expected resettlement challenges but did not expect them to be intense or drastic. Participants also did not expect to find out about the death of relatives, which had a considerable impact on their wellbeing and morale. Mohammad Said was looking forward to his daughter receiving necessary medical treatment in the United States, which they were promised abroad.

But her condition was more complicated than physicians expected. It required years of additional treatment before they could proceed with surgery. "They started here and they [the physicians] can do any procedure for her...the iron goes down," he explained, "Then we can start, um...the surgery...that will take maybe more than two years." Alaa Said is unable to explore educational opportunities because he works full-time to support his family. "I want more opportunities to gain acceptance to the university of college because," he said. "There are refugees that don't know about the system." Firas Harb found out about his father's death while in detention and kept it to himself, "No one knew from my family that my father died. All of them thought that he

was alive. I went into my room and was isolated for two weeks. I was not talking to anyone."

Mesosystem

Family separation and reunification, another sub-theme of instability and uncertainty, was endorsed by most participants (n = 10). It reflected leaving behind family to search for safety in the previous resettlement stage. But in this stage, it represents lingering concerns for their safety abroad. Several participants arrived in the United States with their immediate family (i.e., wife and children or parents and siblings). Other participants were separated from their family, whether immediate or extended, and worried about the reunification process. Specifically, they were concerned about their safety and had countless unanswered questions that prevented them from completely feeling at ease.

Ahmed Shamon was approved for a tourist visa and came to the United States while his wife and children remained in Egypt. He described not knowing how to proceed or whom to ask for help with applying for asylum or family reunification, "I arrived here and I wanted to apply for asylum; how, where, to whom? I didn't know. I only...a passport in my hand. And I had a visa. But applying for asylum, there nothing, nobody." Firas Harb experienced a devastating blow after his sister's initial visa approval was overturned and children's applications were rejected three times. He subsequently came to the United States with his mother and brother but feels unable to move forward with life until reunited with his children. "It does not, it will not, go forward unless I get to see my children," he said.

Fear of consequences is also a sub-theme of instability and uncertainty endorsed by many participants (*n* = 7). In the previous resettlement stage (i.e., resettlement/ migration), it represents apprehension over making decisions with limited information. Decisions during the second stage were primarily centered around resettlement (e.g., whether or not to leave Syria and destination options). While still defined by apprehension over making decisions with limited information, in this stage it is centered around asylum and family reunification. Participants applying for asylum were afraid of being denied while others were concerned with never seeing their family again.

Firas Harb, whose children's applications were rejected three times, explained being terrified by the prospect of not receiving asylum in the United States. "If they tell me, you know, 'You're not approved'," he said. "How would I go to Syria?" Participants also acknowledged being afraid of leaving the United States to visit their family despite having legal status. Rasha Haik had not seen her father for nearly three years and was unable to visit him before he died. "The saddest thing was that I wasn't able to [silence] leave even though I'm here legally," she said.

Exosystem

Social isolation is a sub-theme of resettlement challenges. It was endorsed by most participants (*n* = 9) and reflects crippling social isolation upon arriving to the United States. Participants had opportunities to interact with other refugees, including some from the Middle East, but felt socially isolated nonetheless. "The bad actions I experienced, nobody thinks about you. If you don't work by yourself, individually, nobody will help you," said Marwan Rahal. "And I'm alone here, I don't know anyone." Similar sentiments were reported by Rifat Aswad, "I felt a lot of loneliness. My mother was

crying. I was crying." Participants also described loneliness due to perceived differences between themselves and Americans. "I felt like everyone just thinks [that] I'm really different," said Mais Deeb. "For that reason, I think that I lost confidence in myself when I first came here."

Language barrier is another sub-theme of resettlement challenges endorsed by many participants ($n = 7$). It expands on the previous sub-theme insofar as they were invited to social events by Americans but declined due to discomfort. But this did not solve their dependence on English-speakers. With exception of two participants who were college or graduate school, 58.3% ($n = 7$) had "below basic" English proficiency. The remaining participants were either "proficient" (25%, $n = 3$) or "intermediate" (8.3%, $n = 1$) and one participant had "no" English proficiency (8.3%). The two participants who spoke nearly fluent English also reported feeling lonely. To that end, social isolation and loneliness were not exclusive to this sub-theme.

Joram Bitar was frustrated with being given money to buy food upon arrival. "And so when they give me money, what will I do with money?" he said. "Because it's the first day, second day, what would I do with money? I don't know what to do." Alaa Said explained how he, along with his parents and siblings, felt isolated due to the language barrier, "we feel that nobody, nobody...so we communicate together in Arabic. We have, like a TV box with Arabic channels that we get through ground cable." Similar sentiments were reiterated by his father, Mohammad Said. "A lot of people came to us, asking us to go outside to picnic or something, uh...but the big barrier is the language. We couldn't communicate with them," he said.

Navigating legal processes, an additional sub-theme of resettlement challenges, was endorsed by some participants (n = 6). It represents the burden of either seeking asylum or pursuing family reunification in the United States. While grateful for resettlement, participants reiterated how they would have never left Syria before the conflict. They also described the incredibly difficult task, which was sometimes impossible for legal reasons, of reunification with family abroad. Rasha Haik came to visit her brother in the United States with intention to return when the situation quickly deteriorated. She applied for a student visa (i.e., F-1) and TPS before graduating from college. “But I’m not, I wasn’t sure how plausible and that’s when I applied for this,” she said. “I was scared that if anything happens and I wasn’t able to find a job or wasn’t able to go to law school, I might leave the country.”

Macrosystem

Knowledge of United States, a sub-theme of transitions, was endorsed by many (n = 7) participants and describes their expectations after arriving. It also reflects advice they would give other Syrians in preparing for resettlement. Mais Deeb expected a challenging transition from Turkey to the United States. “I know that life would be really hard over there,” she said. “It is not easy because; I was really worried because we...financially really unprepared for this kind of new life.” But she did not want to know the details in fear of additional worry, “I mean, I really did not wish to know anything.” Firas Harb explained how his expectations for family reunification were different from the reality, “If I had known that I would have to wait for two years or so, like this, I wouldn’t have come. I was actually putting in my mind that it’s a maximum of one year.”

Asil Wasem, who also expected a challenging transition, remarked how helpful it would have been to learn English before coming. “If someone had told me that, ‘So, you can survive in the United States, you have to register for English and learn the language,’ she said. “That’s the main thing because other...other things they just normal.” Joram Bitar had similar thoughts, “And so, before arriving to the United States; you know, they should have some kind of, like you know, language center where you learn to be, to know some things about the United States. Before you come.”

Adjusting to life is a sub-theme of second chances. It was endorsed by many participants (n = 8) and reflects their gradual adjustment to life in the United States. Participants were uncomfortable with cultural differences between the West and Middle East. Differences in cuisine, according to Asil Wasem, were a barrier to adjustment and reminder of life in Syria. “The main thing, you know...spices. But we thought of those things as simple,” she said. “But you get used to it with time.” Ahmed Shamon remarked how his adjustment to life in the United States improved drastically after reunification with his wife and children. “Everything affordable here and with a job, with work and everything else, and my children are going to school and graduating. I look at myself and say, ‘Everything really, really fine’.

Cultural differences, a sub-theme of resettlement challenges, was endorsed by many participants (n = 7) and identified as another barrier to adjustment. Participants described unexpected differences between expectations and reality; including perceived Islamophobia and anti-refugee sentiment in the United States. Those with children were afraid of Western values negatively impacting their parent-child relationships. Before coming, Mais Deeb read about Islamophobia on the Internet. “At the beginning, I was

kind of scared because; this is old but it stays on the internet, people were saying that it's not easy for a girl with a headscarf to life in the United States because she would get harassed or abused," she said.

Asil Wasem was afraid of losing her culture because it is independent from religion in the United States. "It was actually very, very hard," she explained, "So, actually one of the things people talked about, for instance...'This is the country of Islam and then when you get there, you may lose the culture and your religion.' So, I was hesitant to come." Ahmed Shamon reflected on differences in values, particularly family attitudes and ideas, between Syria and the United States. "We are...Syrians...are family. So like, for instance, here in the United States a person may live with his parents until the age of 18," he said. "And then he will be moving, going to another state, and seeing his family maybe once a year."

Self and other advocacy is a sub-theme of dismantled social-systems and institutions. It was endorsed by many participants ($n = 9$) and reflects their oppression in Syria and other countries (e.g., Jordan, Egypt, and Turkey). Participants had no choice but to observe local laws that restricted their freedom of self-advocacy. In the United States, with its history of freedom and liberty, they regained a sense of freedom. They became increasingly comfortable with not only advocating for themselves but also others. Maan Ganim was looking forward to becoming a citizen because it represented these values. "You will get, like, uh...highest- everybody deals with the, the United States Passport...it's different than the other passport," he said. Rasha Haik explained how the United States, despite its various sociopolitical problems, is still defined by freedom and justice. "It is still the country where people come and are able to do advocacy," she said.

Laws and policies, another sub-theme of dismantled social systems and institutions, was endorsed by many participants (n = 6). Being in the United States gave them a new perspective of laws in Syria. Participants reiterated how government corruption in Syria was widespread. They also cited freedom and justice, which contrast the corruption in Syria, as reasons for coming to the United States. Mohammad Said explained that nothing would change in Syria even if President al-Assad was removed because of widespread corruption. "And even if the government changes or something," he said. "It's still the people that are corrupt..." Maan Ganim had similar opinions and described Syrian government officials, different from those in the United States, as corrupt and greedy. "If...in Syria if the like government or the officer or, uh...who's working...the minister, was sucking blood and everything," he said.

Chronosystem

Long journey is a sub-theme of transitions. It was endorsed by many participants (n = 6) and captures their collective experience leaving Syria. It also reflects how their relatively short resettlement journeys, which averaged two years, felt much longer than they were. Joram Bitar remarked these sentiments directly, "It's a long...it's a long journey." Ahmed Shamon described being separated from his family for several years. "This is something that nobody can actually believe happened," he said. "I started, actually, with the asylum process three years ago. After three years, I...my wife and my children arrived. My wife and my children have not been here for long." For some participants, primarily those with their family still in Syria, the journey has not ended yet. Rasha Haik, who was unable to see her father before his death and is still separated from her mother, explained the importance of reflection. "It's good to reflect on your journey

because when you're in it, you take it for granted," she said. Participants also described overcoming unimaginable challenges not only for safety and stability but also for hope.

Hopes and dreams, a sub-theme of second chances, was endorsed by most participants (n = 11). In the previous resettlement stage (i.e., resettlement/migration), it was in the individual. But in this resettlement stage, hopes and dreams is in the chronosystem ecology because it represents the fulfillment of desires. Participants were hopeful of resuming their life in the United States. This includes learning English and gaining independence from resettlement affiliates and the local government (i.e., municipality). Marwan Rahal said, "This is the first new life for me. I was looking forward to my future. I think about how I talk about this or this and my ability speaking English improving." Participants were hopeful of their children pursuing higher education (i.e., college and graduate school). But participants were also hopeful of their children obtaining and education. "Our objectives right now," remarked Ahmed Shamon, "for the children to learn very, very well."

Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings of each aim. Participants in the first aim comprised leaders of resettlement organizations nationwide. More than half the organizations reported misconceptions or incorrect information about resettlement efforts in the community. They were the most supported by civil leaders, such as the clergy or church. Opposition to resettlement efforts of Syrian refugees by community members was reported by half the organizations. Over half the organizations indicated that community members had relatively little knowledge about the resettlement of Syrian refugees. Less than half the organizations reported that funding for current efforts will

continue into the foreseeable future. Participants in the second aim comprised refugees from Syria. Several themes and sub-themes, organized by ecological system (i.e., individual, microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem), reflect their resettlement experiences. Before displacement (i.e., pre-displacement), participants felt comfortable and had access to different resources (e.g., housing, employment, and education). They never anticipated leaving Syria and seeking asylum in the United States, or another country for that matter, before the Arab Spring.

Participants blamed themselves for situations generally outside of their control, such as the disappearance of a family member (e.g., father). They lived in one and sometimes two countries before being granted asylum or a tourist visa to the United States. Participants sacrificed a great deal so their children could have a better future while those without children were hopeful of family reunification. They felt safer in the United States but countered various resettlement challenges (e.g., social isolation, dependence on affiliates for meeting basic needs, and lack of employment opportunities). Findings are discussed in the next chapter. Limitations, including those on policy, clinical practice, and pedagogy (i.e., teaching), are also presented. This is followed by a brief overview of future directions.

Chapter 5: Integrated Discussion

I know what it is like when you are a refugee, living on the mercy of others and having to adjust.

Martti Ahtisaari
Finnish Politician and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate

This dissertation adds to the broader understanding of refugee R&P practices. In the first aim, leaders of resettlement organizations were surveyed about their resettlement practices. Syrian refugees were interviewed about their experiences across each stage of resettlement (i.e., pre-resettlement, resettlement/ migration, and post-resettlement/ adjustment) in the second aim. While organizations publish annual operation reports and resettlement estimates, they do not distribute information about their practices. Similarly, the combined practices of USRAP organizations have not been assessed. These aims inform each other by exploring the same phenomenon (i.e., Syrian refugee resettlement) from different perspectives. Several noteworthy findings emerged that will be discussed here in the context of the broader literature and current sociopolitical climate.

Organizations shared similar concerns, such as growing anti-refugee sentiment towards Syrians, irrespective of region. Their access to resources in facilitating resettlement efforts varied by region. Organizations in the West reported the lowest awareness of available resources to facilitate resettlement efforts. The lowest awareness of expert availability, on the other hand, was reported by organizations in the South. Organizations in the Midwest reported the lowest awareness of funding availability for resettlement efforts.

Refugees shared similar resettlement experiences. They never anticipated leaving and have fond memories of the past. While grateful for the opportunity to rebuild their

lives in the United States, they are also aware of the growing anti-refugee sentiment. These findings are consistent with previous research on the resettlement experience of refugees. They also expand the current understanding of refugees fleeing from violence and persecution in Syria. According to Oxfam (2016), an international non-profit organization dedicated to alleviating poverty, anti-refugee sentiment is reinforced by increasingly restrictive policies.

Characteristics of Refugee Resettlement Program

Organizations surveyed resettled almost half the Syrian refugees in the United States over the last three years (i.e., 2013-2016). They also expected, at least before the presidential inauguration, to resettle more refugees. Resettlement efforts of Syrian children entail coordination between organizations, individual schools, and school districts.

Several organizations do not perform mental health assessments as part of the resettlement process. This is consistent with the findings from a survey of 44 state health coordinators about refugee mental health assessment and screening practices (Shannon, Im, Becher, Simmelink, Wieling, & O'Fallon, 2012). Shannon et al. (2012) found that only 25 states (i.e., 56%) screen refugees for mental health problems upon their arrival. They also found that 17 states (i.e., 70.8%) screen using informal conversation instead of a standardized instrument. Reasons for not screening refugees for mental health problems include, but are not limited to, limited resources (i.e., time and money) and an absence of culturally-appropriate tools (e.g., Murray, Davidson, & Schweitzer, 2010).

Organizations reported directing refugees to the community for mental health services. Although this finding is consistent with current resettlement practices, it is

surprising given relatively high prevalence rates of mental health problems in refugees. A comprehensive literature review – which evaluated 181 studies of 81,866 refugees from 40 countries – found that around 30% have PTSD or depression (Steel, Chey, Silove, Marnane, Bryant, & van Ommeren, 2009). Organizations reported being moderately prepared to resettle Syrian refugees, which appears to have changed since the presidential inauguration. The aforementioned EOs prompted CWS to dismiss over 500 employees. According to president and CEO of CWS, John McCullough, "This remains a highly volatile situation for the vulnerable population we serve, and for our dedicated staff, too" (CWS, 2017). These findings suggest that inadequate resettlement resources strain an already under-funded USRAP.

Concerns and Priorities of Syrian Refugee Resettlement

With respect to identifying basic needs for refugees after their arrival to the United States, the top three concerns of organizations were: a) securing adequate housing for large families, b) helping them find employment, and c) facilitating a cultural orientation. This finding is consistent with research about the basic needs of refugees within three months of arrival (Kanof, 2016) and with media reports about their experiences (Frej & Abdelaziz, 2017). It is concerning that organizations struggle with securing basic resources because evidence suggests that post-arrival access to them has a strong influence on the mental health of refugees (Li, Liddell, & Nickerson, 2016; Nickerson, Bryant, Steel, Silove, & Brooks, 2009). Stressful events (e.g., unemployment and inadequate housing) have a profound impact on displacement-related psychological symptoms (e.g., anxiety, depression, and PTSD).

A decrease in public and private funding makes organizations reliant on support from individuals and other groups. This finding is also consistent with the USRAP structure insofar as organizations receive 1,875 USD per refugee – 925 USD of which must be directly spent on the person – from the federal government (DOS, 2013). While there have always been funding concerns, this finding suggests that the current sociopolitical climate renewed lingering fears. The Trump Administration's EO (Exec. Order No. 13769, 2017) reintroduced these fears by lowering the annual admission ceiling, which indirectly cut the budget of resettlement organizations (Mandelman, 2017).

Despite being suspended by the Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit (2017), the EO had a devastating impact on funding. WR announced closure of five offices and staff dismissal across the United States. Tim Breene, CEO of WR, remarked in the press release (WR, 2017):

> "As a direct result of the recent decision by the Trump Administration to dramatically reduce the number of refugees resettled to the United States throughout fiscal year 2017, World Relief has been forced to make the difficult decision to layoff 140+ staff members across its United States Ministry and close local offices in Boise, Idaho; Columbus, Ohio; Miami, Florida; Nashville, Tennessee; and Glen Burnie, Maryland. Collectively, these five offices have resettled more than 25,000 refugees over the past four decades."

This was followed by closure of a CC office in Nashville, Tennessee (Lind, 2017) and widespread fear of closure among other offices in Anchorage, Alaska (Lester, 2017); Pittsfield, Massachusetts (LeBoeuf, 2017); Reno, Nevada (McAndrew, 2017); and Salt Lake City, Utah (Noble, 2017). Texas announced intent to withdraw from the federal refugee resettlement program last year (MPR; Minnesota Public Radio, 2016). This was followed by a vote in the Texas State Senate to permanently close the office for refugee resettlement and then completely remove it from state operations (TX SB260, 2017).

Although referred to state affairs, and thus not implemented yet, permanent closure of resettlement support centers would have devastating consequences (U.S. News, 2017).

Support from community groups – primarily employers – was another concern of organizations surveyed. Additionally, only a few community members could name resettlement efforts. More than half the organizations reported misconceptions, or incorrect information altogether, of resettlement efforts among members of the community. Organizations in the Northeast and Midwest reported the highest misconception or incorrect information in the community. These findings are consistent with previous evidence on community support and awareness of refugee resettlement efforts. Accordingly, the IRC (Russell, 2017) and HIAS (2017) have launched campaigns to dispel myths about refugee resettlement efforts that are ultimately used to promote harmful policies.

Resettlement Organization Strengths, Assets, Limitations, and Challenges

Indifference to resettlement priorities among members of the community varied between organizations and regions. Indeed, more than half of organizations reported opposition to- and intolerance of- resettlement efforts among community members. The most intolerance was reported by organizations in the Midwest. Organizations in the West, on the other hand, reported the lowest intolerance. A lack of knowledge may be responsible for indifference and intolerance of resettlement efforts. Organizations reported that members of the community – all things considered – had relatively little knowledge about resettlement efforts or Syrian refugees altogether.

Organizations in the South reported the lowest awareness and general knowledge among community members. Both are otherwise consistent between regions. Ron

Branstner, a Conservative anti-Muslim activist from Minnesota, represents such misinformation and intolerance. He recently spoke against resettlement efforts to people in River Falls, Wisconsin (Feshir, 2017). "You open up the door and the more you bring in, the more you can bring in. The door never closes," said Ron. These findings are also consistent with a report by the UNHCR (Ott, 2011) acknowledging the frequent negative portrayal of refugee resettlement. General knowledge of resettlement efforts, or the lack thereof, could be grouped into three categories (i.e., economic fear, fear of violence, and fear of the unknown).

Economic fear is the first category. This fear is based on the belief, which organizations attribute to political rhetoric and the media, that Syrian refugees will drain availability of social services because they depend on government assistance (i.e., welfare). The second category is *fear of violence*. This fear is based on the belief that Syrian refugees are not properly screened before being admitted to the United States. The result of inadequate screening is an increase in extremist ideology and potential for terrorism. *Fear of the unknown*, which primarily manifests as discrimination and prejudice (e.g., Islamophobia), is the third category. This fear is based on the belief that Syrian refugees, being predominantly Muslim, will drastically alter the national landscape.

Given the emergence of several challenges, it is relevant to discuss the deficit-based view of refugee resettlement. The deficit cycle suggests that understanding problems requires an expert analysis (McCaskey, 2008). But this frequently leads to over-simplification of a relatively complex system, such as the USRAP. It also creates dependence and limits options that can result in hopelessness. A strength-based view, on

the other hand, identifies problems but also offers opportunities and solutions. By recognizing strengths, refugee resettlement organizations can be empowered to implement changes themselves. According to McCaskey (2008), this view moves beyond seeing risks to envisioning possibilities. It is therefore important to also discuss strengths that emerged.

The partnership between government agencies and resettlement organization is a strength. This is not only beneficial to organizations but also refugees themselves. The USRAP also operates within international standards outlined by the UNHCR (2002). Resettlement organizations arrange travel and orientation. Organizations secure housing and basic necessities given available resources. Caseworkers and other staff also begin working with refugees on not only navigating the asylum process but also interacting with other social service agencies (e.g., Social Security Administration). An additional strength is availability of volunteers. While organizations may not have adequate financial resources to implement desired efforts, they reported access to volunteers. As members of their respective communities, volunteers are a valuable public relations asset. Additional strengths or resources are discussed below.

Resources for Implementing Organizational Change

Irrespective of region, organizations reported the most support from civil leaders (e.g., clergy). This is consistent with organizations in the United States being historically faith-based (Eby, Iverson, Smyers, & Kekic, 2011). The least support from official leaders, such as public officials, was reported by organizations in the South. This finding may be due to states in that region traditionally leaning against R&P efforts. While Islamophobia and anti-refugee sentiment may not be unique to that region of the United

States, Nagel (2016) found that conservative politicians in the South were more likely to perpetuate “crude stereotypes” (p. 287) of Muslims. They were also more likely to view humanitarian obligations as naïve. Organizations in the Northeast reported the most support from these leaders. The least support from connectors, such as organizers of grassroots movements, was reported by organizations in the West. Given that divide in official leadership by region, it would be interesting to evaluate the factors that contribute to support.

Organizations in the Northeast reported the least support from connectors. In the Midwest, organizations reported the most support from catalysts (i.e., leaders in the community that spread ideas, such as elders). Volunteers, followed by financial donations and physical space, were the most available resources reported by organizations. The availability of volunteers and financial donations, particularly grants, corresponds with organizational effort directed to these resources. In other words, organizations had access to more volunteers than they could use because of the effort they put into to recruiting them. These findings are also consistent with the availability of volunteers without the necessary resources for training them (e.g., SAMHSA; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration, 2005).

The lowest awareness of resource availability was reported by organizations in the West. Organizations in the Northeast reported the highest awareness. The lowest awareness of funding opportunities, particularly grants, was reported by organizations in the Midwest. The highest awareness was reported by organizations in the South. These findings are also consistent with previous research discussed in the second chapter.

Furthermore, they reflect the divide between official leaders (e.g., governors, senators, and representatives) in support of existing resettlement efforts (see Figure 9).

Resettlement Experiences of Syrian Refugees

Stage 1: Pre-Resettlement

Before being displaced (i.e., during pre-resettlement), participants felt safe and had access to basic resources. Some even had access to Western luxuries. Participants were either employed, often working in the family business, or pursuing an education (i.e., high school or college). They had social networks and rarely worked while attending school, which represents their immediate environment (i.e., exosystem). This finding is relevant because they never anticipated leaving Syria despite systemic government corruption. Participants were even less likely to leave after President Bashar al-Assad, who completed his medical training in the United Kingdom, introduced sweeping liberal reforms (e.g., Internet and satellite television).

This unprecedented shift occurred in the sociopolitical climate (i.e., macrosystem) and therefore affected all aspects of life before displacement. This comfort made their subsequent displacement even more burdensome, which may in part explain how participants made the decision to leave Syria (e.g., Mironova, Mrie, & Whitt, 2014). Participants also experienced a pervasive sense of instability because choices had lasting consequences (e.g., leaving Syria also meant abandoning extended family). This reflects their individual, particularly physical and psychological health, insofar as choices were viewed as a responsibility. It may be that remaining in Syria hoping for an end to the violence and destruction meant not only risking their lives but also the lives of their immediate family (i.e., spouse and children).

While fleeing could lead to a better future, away from an oppressive political system and party, it almost always led to uncertainty. This finding suggests that traditional values of prioritizing family over self only compound feelings of uncertainty (i.e., macrosystem). Participants without a spouse or partner worried about their immediate (e.g., parents or siblings) and extended (e.g., cousins) family (i.e., microsystem). Participants with a spouse had children and therefore worried about their wellbeing, which is consistent with previous research (e.g., this reflects the individual because it refers to a set of feelings, such as helplessness and discomfort). Taken together, these findings suggest that pre-resettlement is related to a gradual shift of influence or control from the participant (i.e., individual) to their immediate environment (i.e., microsystem).

Participants continued to reflect on their safety before and after being displaced. They described the inability to avoid memories of the past despite a desire to move forward. At the same time, participants did not want to forget the past because they were content before being displaced. This frequently caused confusion and frustration, which exacerbated existing vulnerabilities. Perception of time is important to refugees' during post-resettlement/adjustment because it unifies their experiences across other stages of resettlement (Grant & Guerin, 2014). According to Beiser and Hyman (1997), refugees separate their perception of time by resettlement stage to cope with adverse circumstances. This suggest that "time splitting" is vital to integration of the past, present, and future. But it also supports previous findings refugees, after being displaced, experience time (i.e., chronosystem) as circular without a clear beginning or end (Beiser & Wickrama, 2004, Curtis & Pajaczkowska, 1994).

Stage 2: Resettlement/Migration

Instability and uncertainty replaced any remaining hopes of safety and stability during displacement (i.e., resettlement/migration). With increasing violence in their hometowns and cities (i.e. microsystem), the possibility of being uprooted became a reality. Participants without a spouse or partner left behind family vowing to return despite fear of never reuniting. This is arguably reinforced through helplessness and discomfort, which may subsequently impact wellbeing (i.e., individual). Participants with a spouse and children left together but applied for asylum separately. This finding is consistent with recent UNHCR (2013b) estimates that more than 70,000 Syrian refugee families live without a father. They either leave their wives and children to find work in neighboring countries (i.e., Lebanon, Jordan, or Turkey) or make their way to the United States with hopes of family reunification.

Separation from immediate family, with the husband leaving his wife and children, led to regret (i.e., individual) among participants. This finding is also thought-provoking because it suggests differences in how men and women experience displacement. Furthermore, it reflects the aforementioned shift from control to a lack thereof between resettlement stages. Pavlish (2007) interviewed refugees in Africa to discern gender differences in the resettlement experience. She found that both men and women think about the lives they left behind. Women were more concerned about their children, primarily daughters, which may be associated with culture. Men, on the other hand, were more concerned about the future and providing for their family. It would be valuable to further explore gender differences.

Participants without adequate financial resources were unable to apply for a tourist visa in another country, such as Egypt. They traveled by car or bus to a nearby country where they lived, sometimes for years, before coming to the United States. Displacement widened the income gap by exploiting existing vulnerabilities (i.e., exosystem and macrosystem), a finding which suggests that financial resources may buffer the impact of displacement-related stressors. Participants were hopeful of regaining safety and stability in another country yet experienced the opposite upon arrival to the United States. They were subjected to discrimination and prejudice. As noted by Pope and Garcia-Peltoniemi (1991), this is not uncommon in refugee-receiving countries (i.e., macrosystem). This was accompanied by physical and psychological complaints (i.e., individual).

Participants described challenges with accessing healthcare for conditions present before leaving Syria and those induced by displacement. This finding is consistent with research on barriers of refugees accessing healthcare (El-Khatib, Scales, Vearey, & Forsberg, 2013). Physical complaints included psychosomatic symptoms from anxiety and other serious problems (e.g., stroke). The primary psychological complaint was anxiety, which reflects living in perpetual fear. Children assumed adult responsibilities by working to support their family because adults were unable to obtain employment authorization, which reflects shifting responsibilities (i.e., macrosystem ecology). The UNHCR (2013b) estimates that over 300,000 Syrian refugee children work to support their families instead of going to school in Lebanon alone. Surprisingly, being granted a tourist visa or asylum in the United States elicited conflicting feelings. Participants were grateful for the opportunity to rebuild their lives but also afraid because they did not

know what to expect. It would be valuable to further explore the relationship between opportunity and fear in the context of resettlement.

Stage 3: Post-Resettlement/Adjustment

Participants no longer felt threatened after arriving to the United States (i.e., post-resettlement/adjustment). Unsurprisingly, they continued to experience instability and uncertainty (i.e., mesosystem) from resettlement challenges. These include separation from family and friends, dependence on others for even simple tasks, and memories of the past. Participants remained in contact with significant others overseas but also experienced technological problems as the infrastructure in Syria collapsed (i.e., exosystem). They frequently blamed themselves for abandoning their family. Interestingly, there appears to be no research on the relationship between resettlement and survivors guilt (i.e., the belief that surviving a traumatic event, while others did not, is wrong). The experience would arguably be the same because families abroad are surviving albeit being in danger.

Participants also felt lonely in the United States (i.e., individual), which they attributed to being different from others (i.e., mesosystem). They were upset and ashamed of not speaking English, and therefore, dependent on others for everything. Indeed, this was particularly devastating for professionals relegated to manual labor. Participants sometimes felt overwhelmed by memories of the past, a finding consistent with previous research (e.g., Cieraad, 2015). They compare the past and present despite gratitude for admission to the United States. Unfortunately, the impact of resettlement/migration on identity formation and transformation is not well understood (La Barbara, 2014). Ofer (2014) argues that the identity of refugees shifts after escaping an oppressive

environment and worsening living conditions. These perceptions subsequently lead to confusion.

Participants also justified sacrifices with giving their children a better future (e.g., Atwell, Gifford, & McDonald-Wilmsen, 2009). Those without children, on the other hand, actively pursued their hopes and dreams. This finding is consistent previous research. Solheim, Zaid, and Ballard (2015) used ambiguous loss theory, discussed more later, to better understand the experience of Mexican migrant families in the United States. They found that participants mourned their separation from family abroad. Solheim et al. (2015) also found that families, despite considerable post-resettlement challenges, felt hopeful about the future.

Limitations

There are several limitations to note when considering these findings. Data collection occurred at one point in time for both aims. Specifically, it occurred concurrent with the United States presidential campaigns and subsequent election. This is relevant to the first aim insofar as refugee resettlement, with a focus on Syrians, was a topic of contention not only between political parties and candidates but also their constituents (Jones, 2015). As for the second aim, refugees were hesitant of participating or speaking freely in fear of unanticipated repercussions (e.g., deportation or termination of resettlement assistance). They were also cautious of accidentally sharing information that could be used against them (i.e., there was misunderstanding on the government affiliation of a state university). It is important to acknowledge that this reflects their experiences in Syria where most public and private services were sponsored by the government. Participants' hesitation is also consistent with increasing raids by

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to remove immigrants or refugees (Rein, Hauslohner, & Somashekhar, 2017).

Data for the first aim relied exclusively on organizations experienced with resettlement of Syrian refugees. To that end, the sample may be biased because it neglected organizations with limited or no experience. While participants offered a unique perspective, and arguably had a comprehensive overview of the resettlement program, their responses may also not accurately reflect those of caseworkers or other staff directly working with them. Similarly, the response rate was relatively low. Participants triggered additional questions with their responses (i.e., participants were presented with either more or less questions depending on their responses). This may have contributed to fatigue and attrition. Participants may also have responded with socially desirable answers, which reflects the sociopolitical climate and a deficit-based view of the USRAP. The CRM was not developed for an online survey platform. Participants were not able to expand on each question, and thus, may have felt limited by the answer choices.

Participants may also have been uncomfortable endorsing "extremely unprepared" in facilitating resettlement of Syrians due to fear of criticism for existing efforts. This raised suspicion, particularly after the inauguration, as to whether participants felt comfortable to publicly discuss issues related to R&P practices. This was a reasonable concern because then President-elect Trump politicized refugee admissions as had never been done before. "The rhetoric had an impact," remarked director of the International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP) Becca Heller (Amos, 2016). This was followed by widespread condemnation of anti-immigration sentiment by human rights organizations,

such as HRW and the Physicians for Human Rights (PHR). Kenneth Roth, executive director of HRW, remarked that "President-elect Trump should move from the headline-grabbing rhetoric of hatred and govern with respect for all who live in the United States" (HRW, 2016).

It would have been advisable to conduct interviews for the second aim in the participants' language (Squires, 2009). But I do not speak Arabic and am a cultural outsider. Moreover, Syrian refugees are a particularly hidden group. These challenges made using an interpreter/cultural broker necessary. Although native Arabic speakers with substantial professional experiences, Ibrahim being from Morocco and Saleh from Saudi Arabia, their nationalities may have prevented participants from disclosing more information than they otherwise would have. Interviews were not meant to create generalizable knowledge but the sample size was relatively small. Thematic saturation was met across the three stages of resettlement but it would have been ideal to obtain a broader representation of perspectives based on key variables (e.g., gender, age, and education).

Despite these limitations, the findings are valuable because they capture the experiences of refugee resettlement organizations in the United States during a period of considerable sociopolitical turmoil. They also provide insight into the experiences of an increasingly marginalized group of refugees fleeing from violence and persecution in Syria.

Policy Implications

What would happen if citizens and elected officials learned about the national resettlement program? Would citizens embrace newcomers with open arms? What about

elected officials, would they stand in solidarity with the ethos of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" on which the United States was founded? Or would both disregard a longstanding history of accepting those displaced by violence and persecution by holding onto their views? These questions illustrate that the findings from this dissertation have public policy implications. A significant source of prejudice and discrimination towards Syrian refugees, along with other groups for that matter, is misinformation. The gulf between elected officials and the public is depending, which not only reinforces anti-refugee sentiment but also incites fear. A deficit-based view of resettlement also prevents change by reinforcing ignorance.

According to the Cato Institute, an independent think-tank dedicated to public advocacy, the annual odds of being killed by a refugee in the United States are 1 in 3.64 billion (Nowrasteh, 2016). The annual odds of becoming President of the United States, on the other hand, are 1 in 10 million (University of California at Berkeley, n.d.). Despite these staggering estimates, people are afraid of refugees. The findings from these studies therefore lend support to public education initiatives about refugees and resettlement efforts. This includes the R&P, with a focus on security screening procedures and availability of post-resettlement resources, the role of non-governmental organizations, and the conflict from which refugees are fleeing.

The theory of organizational readiness for change (Weiner, 2009) provides insight into addressing some of the aforementioned challenges. According to this theory, achieving a desired outcome depends on commitment (i.e., mutual understanding of a problem) and efficacy (i.e., execution the solution). This can be accomplished by evaluating three key determinants: a) task demands, b) availability of resources, and c)

contextual factors. Organizations were unified in their commitment to resolving problems with the USRAP. To that end, they acknowledged ongoing and emerging problems that impact their ability to engage in resettlement efforts. These include inadequate funding and access to resources, community misunderstanding, and division in leadership.

Although a concern even before the Trump Administration, organizations were worried about being forced to cease their efforts altogether. Misunderstanding in the community appeared to be a result of fear. Organizations described mounting anti-refugee sentiment since the presidential election and inauguration. This may be due to public normalization of hateful rhetoric. Division in local and national leadership exacerbates the aforementioned concerns. Organizations explained that over half of their support is from civil leaders, such as the clergy. This is consistent with the historic foundation of resettlement efforts in the United States. But they also described inconsistent support from official leaders (e.g., politicians), which is concerning insofar as they have considerable influence.

Paul Spiegel (2017), a physician at Johns Hopkins University and former senior official at the UNHCR, recently wrote about these challenges. He acknowledged that the current process is complex but went further by labeling it as broken, "The humanitarian system was not designed to address the types of complex conflicts that are happening at present; it is not simply overstretched – it is no longer fit for purpose" (Spiegel, 2017, p. 1). Spiegel made several recommendations, two of which are driven by policy, consistent with the aforementioned findings.

Remaking instead of revising the nexus between leadership and coordination is the first recommendation. The current approach is overly fragmented. The second

recommendation is making interventions efficient and effective, in addition to sustainable, by adapting them to context. Resettlement organizations could also use visual aids or tools like the eco-map to help staff better understand the refugee experience. This may lead to working with clients rather than for them, which facilitates self-sufficiency. Taken together, these findings confirm that implementing effective change requires raising awareness and clarifying misconceptions about the USRAP.

Clinical Implications

With an appreciation and understanding of complex systems, MFTs and other behavioral health professionals are in a unique position to advocate for the realization of human rights. Their diverse roles, which range from direct service providers to scholars and community leaders, are conducive to connecting experts with members of the community. A basic understanding of its complexities is necessary to have a dialogue about the admission process. This is particularly important because, as previously noted, misinformation is a prominent source of discrimination and prejudice.

Such understanding may also prevent misattribution of complaints. Participants described being unsuccessfully treated for physical symptoms (e.g., stomach pain) with a psychological cause. Clinicians should therefore target clinical interventions by urgency or severity, which could be accomplished by using the double ABC-X model of family stress and adaptation (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983a) as an assessment framework. Findings are presented in the context of this model, in addition to, interacting ecological systems summarized in the second chapter.

Challenges reported by participants during post-resettlement/adjustment varied by ecological system. At the microsystem, they felt overwhelmed by unmet needs (i.e.,

inadequate housing and absence of employment or educational opportunities). This exacerbated existing problems, such as anxiety and depression, in the individual. Participants had conflicting feelings due to separation from family and friends at the mesosystem. They were also afraid of making mistakes with irreversible consequences at this ecology. Participants felt frustrated and socially isolated at the *exosystem* because they did not speak English. This compounded their fear of making mistakes in navigating legal processes. Cultural differences between Syria (i.e., Middle East) and United States (i.e., West) further exacerbated their concerns at the "macrosystem."

Resources available to participants varied by pre-displacement socioeconomic status, they either had financial resources and were not entirely dependent on the resettlement organization or they had no financial resourced and were entirely dependent on an affiliate (i.e., visible resource characteristics). Although financial resources buffered the impact of resettlement challenges, participants still required assistance with basic needs. Their personal coping mechanisms were limited (i.e., invisible resource characteristics). Participants experienced psychological problems consistent with PTSD, including anxiety and depression. This reflects how the context has a powerful influence on their daily lives.

Participants' internal (i.e., family) coping mechanisms were also limited. They did not openly discuss challenges with family members as to protect them, which arguably had a negative effect by exacerbating existing psychological problems. Similarly, participants had either limited or no social support. They felt socially isolated and therefore perceived themselves differently from others (i.e., individual). Participants also

perceived resettlement challenges differently but, for the most part, were hopeful about the future.

Research suggests that employment, financial insecurity, and English language competency are key determinants of post-arrival adjustment. Refugees' previous training and experiences are frequently not recognized (Busch Nsonwu, Busch-Armendariz, Cook Hefron, Mahapatra, & Fong, 2013), which is associated with poor self-image (Yako & Biswas, 2014). This is important insofar as employment among refugees facilitates acculturation while promoting self-esteem (Phillimore, 2011). Financial insecurity is related to employment. Refugees receive cash and medical assistance during their first three months in the United States. However, they are often unable to support themselves thereafter due to working only part-time and/or for minimum wage (Coughlan, Stam, & Kingston, 2016). These findings support staggering clinical interventions to address presenting problems or concerns by urgency (i.e., from most to least urgent). Employment may be the most urgent and should therefore be prioritized (i.e., "A"). This may be accomplished by either directly working with clients or making an appropriate referral while providing guidance.

It is important to recognize that refugees, most of whom experienced one or more traumatic event, may not be able to seek employment. Some may even be unable to perform the necessary duties required once employed. Clinicians are therefore advised to help refugees relieve their distress (i.e., "B"). Irrespective of clinical intervention used, Ehntholt and Yule (2006, p. 1,202) suggest focusing on developing "a sense of stability, safety, and trust [to help clients] regain a sense of control over their lives" (i.e., "C"). Indeed, emerging findings suggest that the overarching aim of clinical interventions

should be reducing isolation while creating a shared sense of community that facilitates social connections (Silove, Ventevogel, & Rees, 2017). At the same time, cultural and linguistic differences are ongoing challenges of delivering interventions to refugees (Murray et al., 2010).

Consistent with the findings of this study, Miller and Rasmussen (2017) propose embracing an ecological model in treating refugees. Their recommendations are based on the historic neglect of displacement-related stressors in favor of addressing the direct effects of violence (e.g., anxiety, depression, and PTSD). Although important to address these effects, Miller and Rasmussen (2017) recommend modifying interventions to stage of resettlement, such as after arrival (i.e., post-resettlement/adjustment). This includes, but is not limited to, addressing: a) poverty, b) unemployment and dependency, c) family conflict and violence, d) loss of possessions, e) discrimination, f) family separation, g) legal status (e.g., asylum) uncertainty, h) detention due to legal status, and i) loss of social networks. These recommendations are beginning to gain widespread support (e.g., Jordans, Semrau, Thornicroft, van Ommeren, 2012; Miller & Rasmussen, 2010; Patel, Kellezi, & Williams, 2014; Purgato, Tol, & Bass, 2017).

Pedagogical Implications

Pedagogy, or the method and practice of teaching, is a relational process defined by an exchange of information (van Mannen, 1994). While rote learning may be useful in achieving certain milestones, such as becoming independently licensed, it may be less relevant in therapy or counseling. To that end, more attention appears to be given to taking context into account and evaluating these complexities systemically (Weine, 2011). This is particularly important because the sociopolitical landscape is not only

continuously evolving but directly impacts the functioning of individuals, couples, and families.

Northey (2002) surveyed 292 MFTs in the United States about their treatment approach. The most common therapy models reported by participants were: a) cognitive-behavioral (27.3%, *n* = 80), b) multi-systemic (10.6%, *n* = 31), c) eclectic (24, 8.2%), and d) solution-focused (6.5%, *n* = 19). Although several years old, these findings suggest the widespread emphasis on individual interventions. MFTs are taught to conceptualize presenting problems using a systemic perspective. However, they are not taught about delivering interventions systemically. Professionals are instead encouraged to pursue advanced clinical training within specific systems rather than across multiple systems. As previously described, this presents various challenges to working with asylum-seekers or refugees in the clinical context.

Crippling depression may warrant a combination of pharmacology (e.g., anti-depressants) and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). If uncertainty over being able to pay rent is the underlying reason of depression, neither intervention may be effective. A more appropriate intervention in such a case may be advocacy (Utrzan, 2015). MFTs may benefit from being taught the tenets of social work in their clinical practice with refugees. This includes focusing on the person and their environment, in addition to tailoring interventions and treatment to accommodate the client's growth. Both could be accomplished by drawing a client's eco-map, similar to the figures that illustrate the ecological systems impact of resettlement across its different stages.

Future Directions

Several future research directions will facilitate understanding of the USRAP. Data collection occurred during the presidential election cycle. As such, a follow-up survey should be sent to participants. A revised survey would not have to be extensive and could simply ask whether their responses have changed since the inauguration. Similarly, the program should be evaluated longitudinally because existing studies have been relatively small and time-limited. This would consider the impact of social policies, such as EO No. 13769 (2017), on the resettlement program.

It may also be that responses of organizational leaders do not accurately reflect the program or capture the experience of other staff. The view of other organizational staff, who often have a more direct role with refugees and citizens in the community, should therefore be considered. This could be accomplished using the Delphi Method because it emphasizes strengths, which is important given that the USRAP has historically been evaluated from a deficit-based perspective, while encouraging direct participant involvement (Keeney, McKenna, & Hasson, 2011). Better understanding the refugee resettlement program may improve the process and, in doing so, once again embrace the ethos on which the United States was founded.

Each stage is critical to understanding the refugee experience, but post-resettlement/adjustment should be examined further to address resettlement challenges. While participants did not directly endorse or report ambiguous loss, they referred to its underlying assumptions in the context of navigating legal processes (i.e., asylum or family reunification). This stage should therefore be evaluated using ambiguous loss theory (Boss 1999, 2006). A defining characteristic of ambiguous loss theory is the

absence of closure. This theory suggests that ambiguous loss leaves a person searching for meaning, and in doing so, delays the grieving process.

From the perspective of ambiguous loss theory, the grieving process is different from mourning because a person is unable to obtain closure (Boss, 2000). There are two types of ambiguous loss (i.e., physical and psychological). Physical loss refers to the absence of a person; that is, his or her body. People fleeing from conflict often leave behind family and friends. Without recovery of a body, as is often the case with enforced disappearances, people are left to indefinitely mourn their loss. Psychological loss, on the other hand, refers to the mental absence of a person. This includes identity fragmentation following displacement and resettlement. The grieving process for psychological loss is particularly challenging because people struggle to acknowledge and confront the situation (Abrams, 2001). This theory is useful in understanding the refugee experience because it frames loss, physical and psychological, as a paradox (Utrzan & Northwood, 2016). Recommendations by the SAMHSA are particularly relevant in the context of these findings.

An informed service delivery consists of six principles (SAMHSA, 2017). The first principle is *safety*. Providers must take necessary steps to make clients feel physically and psychologically safe. There is no universal definition of safety. Instead, providers are encouraged to closely work with clients to reach a shared understanding of safety and how to achieve it. *Trustworthiness and transparency* is the second principle. Aside from instances that require making decisions without clients (e.g., suicidal or homicidal ideation), providers should build and maintain trust with clients by promoting

their empowerment. This is important considering loss of control is a defining characteristic of displacement.

The third principle is *peer support*. Providers should promote collaboration between clients with similar experiences. Interventions that extend beyond the individual to include their community and peers facilitate healing across different ecologies (e.g., Kira, Ahmed, Wasim, Mahoud, Colrain, & Rai, 2012). *Collaboration and mutuality* is the fourth principle. While completely balancing power differences between provider and client is impossible, shared-decision making conveys respect. It also recognizes the role of refugees in therapy.

The fifth principle is *empowerment, voice, and choice*. While providers may not always agree with clients, acknowledging their choices and avoiding coercion is vital to promoting recovery from trauma. It also enables refugees to build self-advocacy skills, which are often limited after displacement. *Cultural, historical, and gender issues* is the sixth principle. Providers should take imitative to directly address bias and stereotypes related, but not limited to, race, gender, and religion. This enables adaptive service delivery while leveraging other principles such as collaboration and mutuality. Taken together, these principles convey respect for clients and their resettlement experiences.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the findings of each aim were interpreted through their respective theoretical frameworks. A needs and readiness assessment of the USRAP, with a focus on Syrian refugees, was performed for the first aim. Consistent with studies presented in the second chapter, organizations encountered challenges with their resettlement efforts. These include limited funding and absence of knowledge in their respective communities

that contribute to anti-refugee sentiment. But organizations also had different resources that were strengths in their resettlement efforts. Different from previous findings, given the continuously shifting sociopolitical landscape, organizations were more concerned about their efforts after the presidential election.

For the second aim, Syrian refugees in the United states were interviewed about their resettlement experiences. Participants never anticipated leaving Syria and coming to the United States, or another country for that matter, before the conflict. Their experiences during each stage of resettlement cut across all ecological systems (i.e., systems were interdependent). While consistent with previous findings, participants were interviewed during a sociopolitical shift in the United States (i.e., presidential election and subsequent inauguration). This heightened their concern over anti-refugee sentiment. It also led to fear of discrimination and prejudice similar to their experience after leaving Syria but before coming to the United States.

Implications were discussed for policy, with an emphasis on the USRAP, clinical practice, and pedagogy (i.e., teaching). Policy implications include correcting misconceptions over resettlement through awareness raising. Implications for clinical practice, on the other hand, include structuring interventions by need (i.e., focusing on basic needs such as housing before addressing coping mechanisms). Pedagogical implications entail teaching MFTs, along with other providers, about the systemic impact of displacement and resettlement.

Afterword

There are many reasons scholars pursue research topics. They may be curious, obligated by a grant, or looking to use personal experiences. I came to the University of

Minnesota knowing what research to pursue. Despite being the first person in my family to graduate from college, or graduate school for that matter, I knew how important it was to choose a topic of personal interest. I also knew that this topic could leverage gaps in literature to make a valuable contribution. The dissertation topic I chose enabled me to be a researcher and participant. As outlined in the reflective statement and third chapter, I grew up during a brutal civil war that continues to haunt the memories of its survivors. I was separated from my father for several years and am still disconnected from my extended family. I became intimately familiar with instability and uncertainty at a very young age.

Unfortunately, this familiarity remained for much of my adult life. It flared when triggered by reminders of the past, such as working with refugees during my doctoral internship. I knew that pursuing research on the resettlement experiences of refugees would be physically and psychologically exhausting. But I had a strong commitment to better understand R&P practices from the perspective of organizations and refugees. I was also convinced that my personal experiences of fleeing from violence, and living in another country for several years before being granted asylum, could provide valuable insight into the phenomenon.

The methodological approach I chose for my dissertation is consistent with my epistemological stance. I strongly believe that an objective reality does not exist. This is why I did not want to entirely eliminate my experiences. I also do not think it would have been possible to disregard my experiences. After making the decision to use my experiences, they became important to every part of the dissertation (e.g., research question development, methodology design, and data collection). This process was

particularly valuable to gaining insight while interviewing participants. It enabled me to immerse myself in their worlds, and in doing so, obtain insight into their lives.

The role of my personal experiences became most apparent during participant interviews. As a MFT, I knew that building rapport was critical to facilitating trust. I also knew, from the philosophical school of phenomenology, that building a relationship with participants was important to the construction of their stories. I was therefore purposeful about telling participants about my interest in their stories. I also made this decision thinking they would feel more comfortable sharing their experiences with another refugee. When participants asked about my resettlement experience – and they all did – I was open and honest. I felt that they were more forthcoming after I shared what I had been through with them. I became a human, someone of a different nationality but similar past, rather than a scholar. I believe that not disclosing my experiences or being dishonest would have been a betrayal of my motivation for this topic.

Towards the end of data collection, my fatigue or burnout became apparent. This was the most challenging part of using my personal experiences. I was familiar with the signs of fatigue from my doctoral internship working with survivors of politically-sanctioned torture. I was also warned by Dr. Wieling about the dangers of burnout. But my emotional exhaustion was not only due to the number of participants I interviewed. It was due to the number of successive interviews, in addition to, being present to the cathartic relief participants reported. I was completely exhausted after each interview, which made journaling dreadful. I needed to sleep and distance myself from the dissertation. I actively fought the urge to draw similarities between myself and participants because it sometimes I felt like I was interviewing myself. This dissertation

was more challenging than I had imagined. Although it made me reflect on difficult aspects of my painful past, I would do it again.

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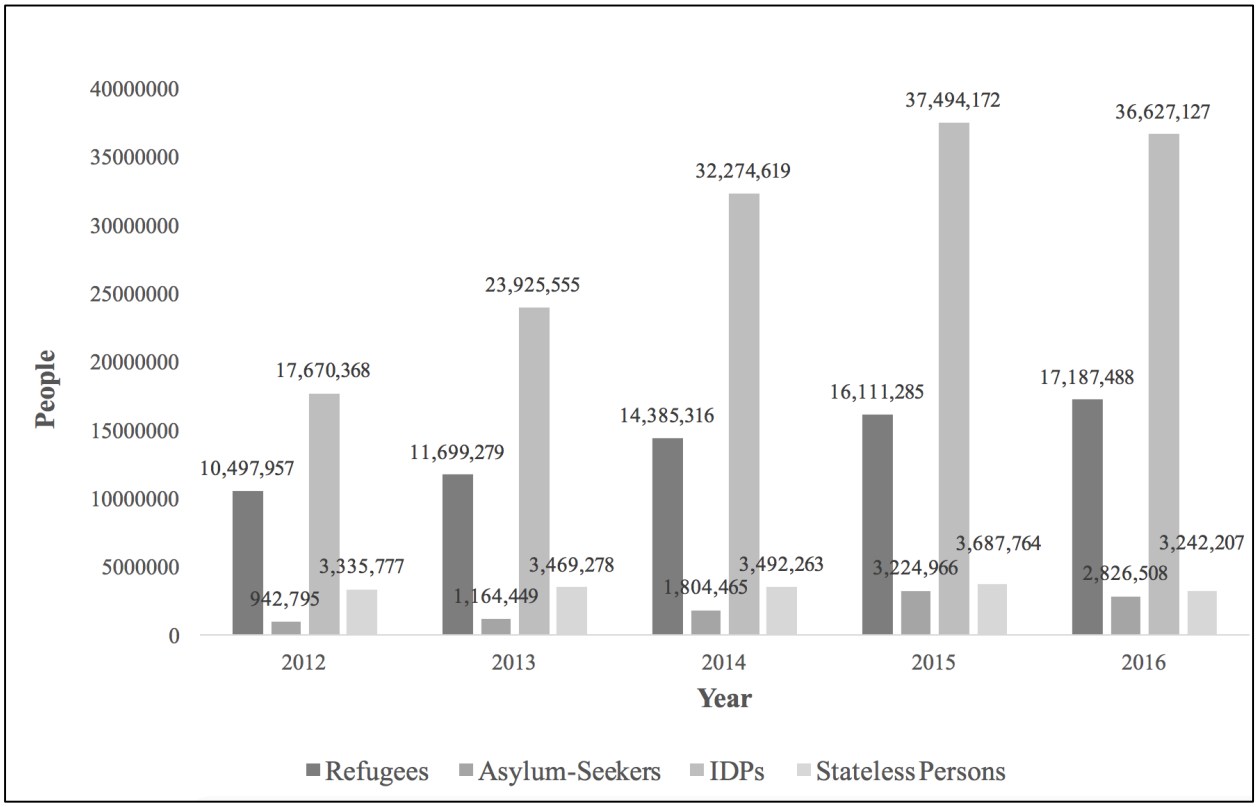
Figures



Note. Adapted using data from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR, 2017, 2016b, 2016b).

Figure 1. Five-year (i.e., 2012-2016) displacement estimates.

Figure 2. Map of Syria.

Figure 3. Syrian flag under Ottoman Empire.

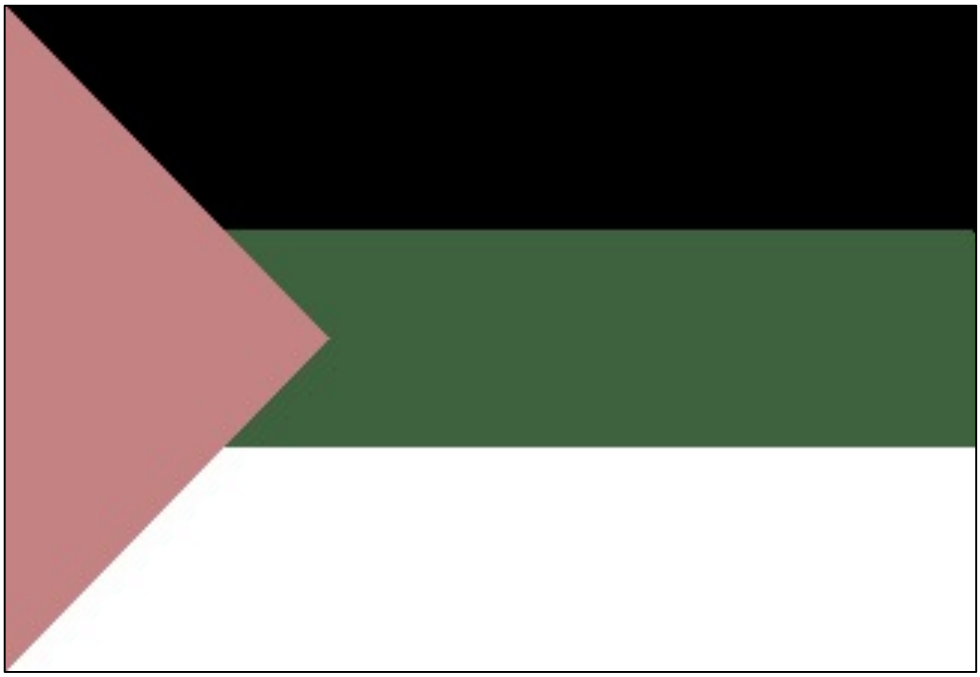


Figure 4. Syrian flag under Arab Military Administration by Great Britain.

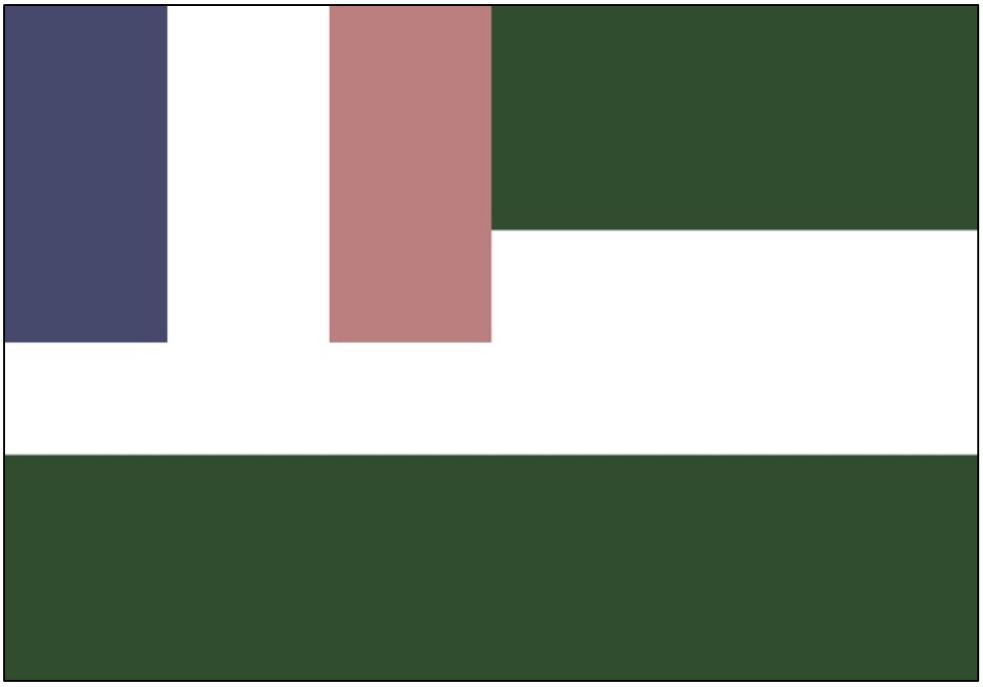


Figure 5. Syrian flag under French occupation

Figure 6. Syrian flag after Constitution draft under French occupation.

Figure 7. Syrian flag under al-Assad government and Ba'ath Party.

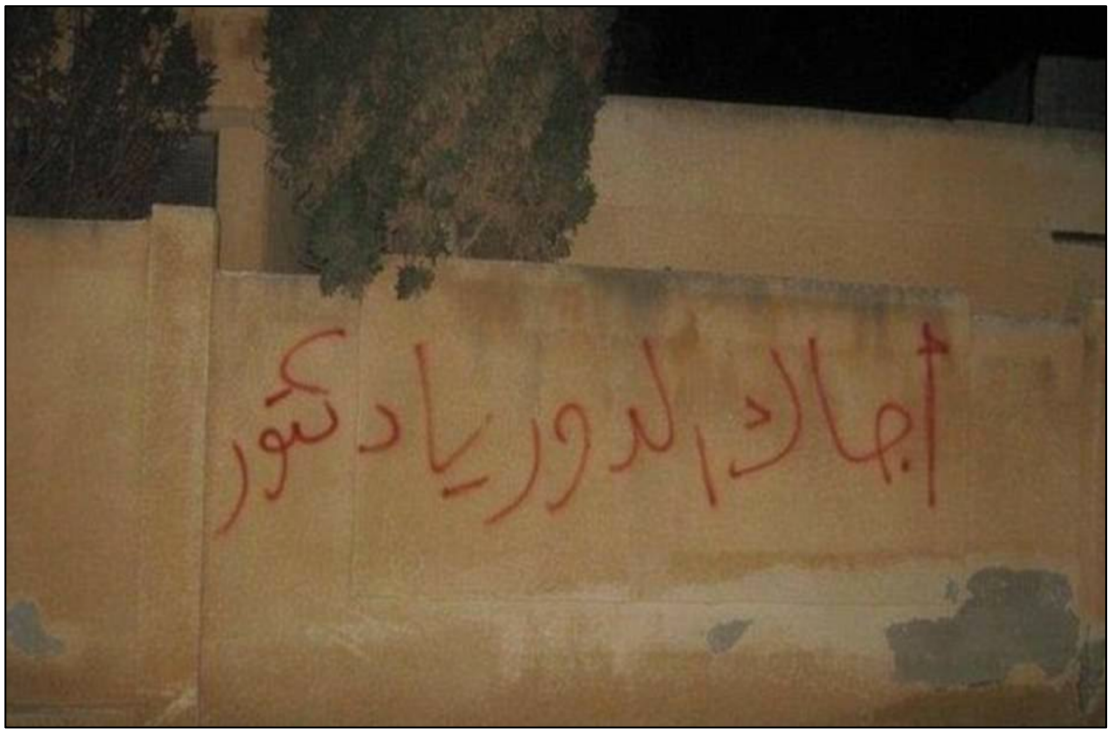


Figure 8. Graffiti on wall of school in Daraa, Syria (i.e., "You are next, Doctor Bashar al-Assad").

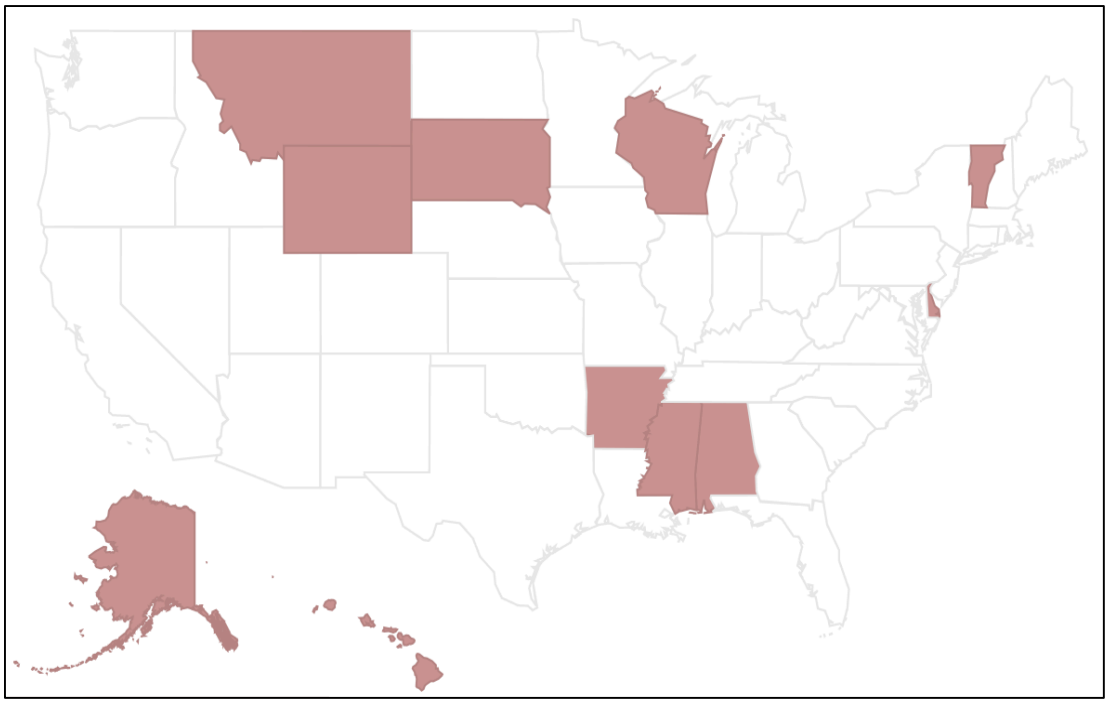


Figure 9. United States map of non-resettlement states.

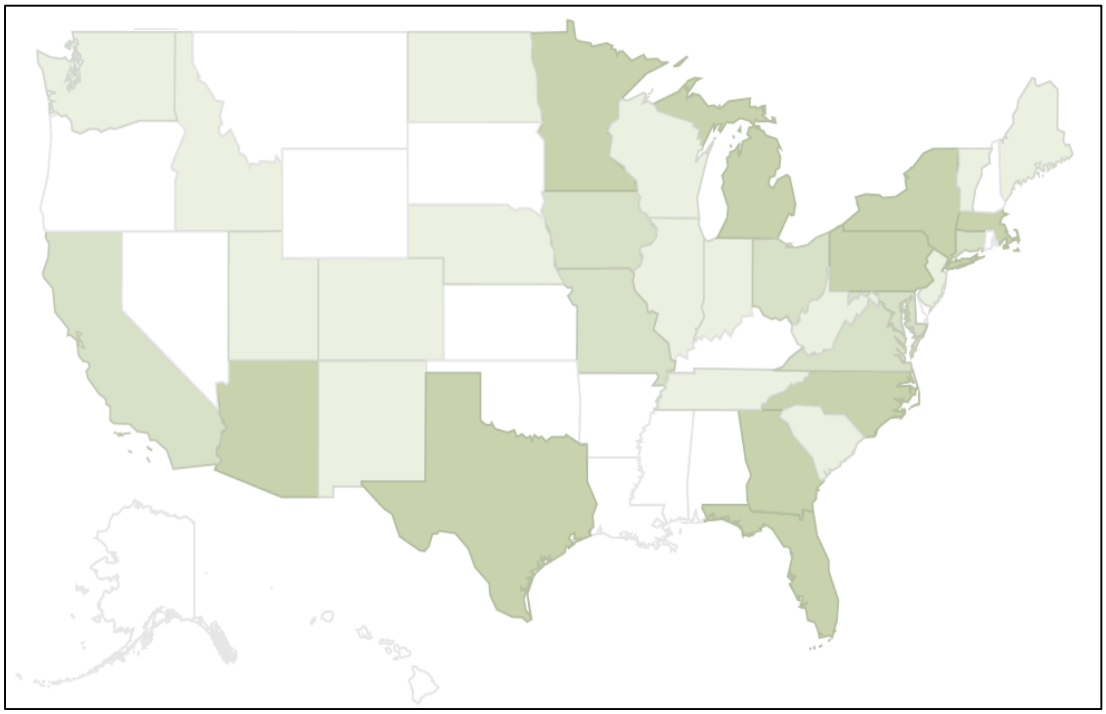
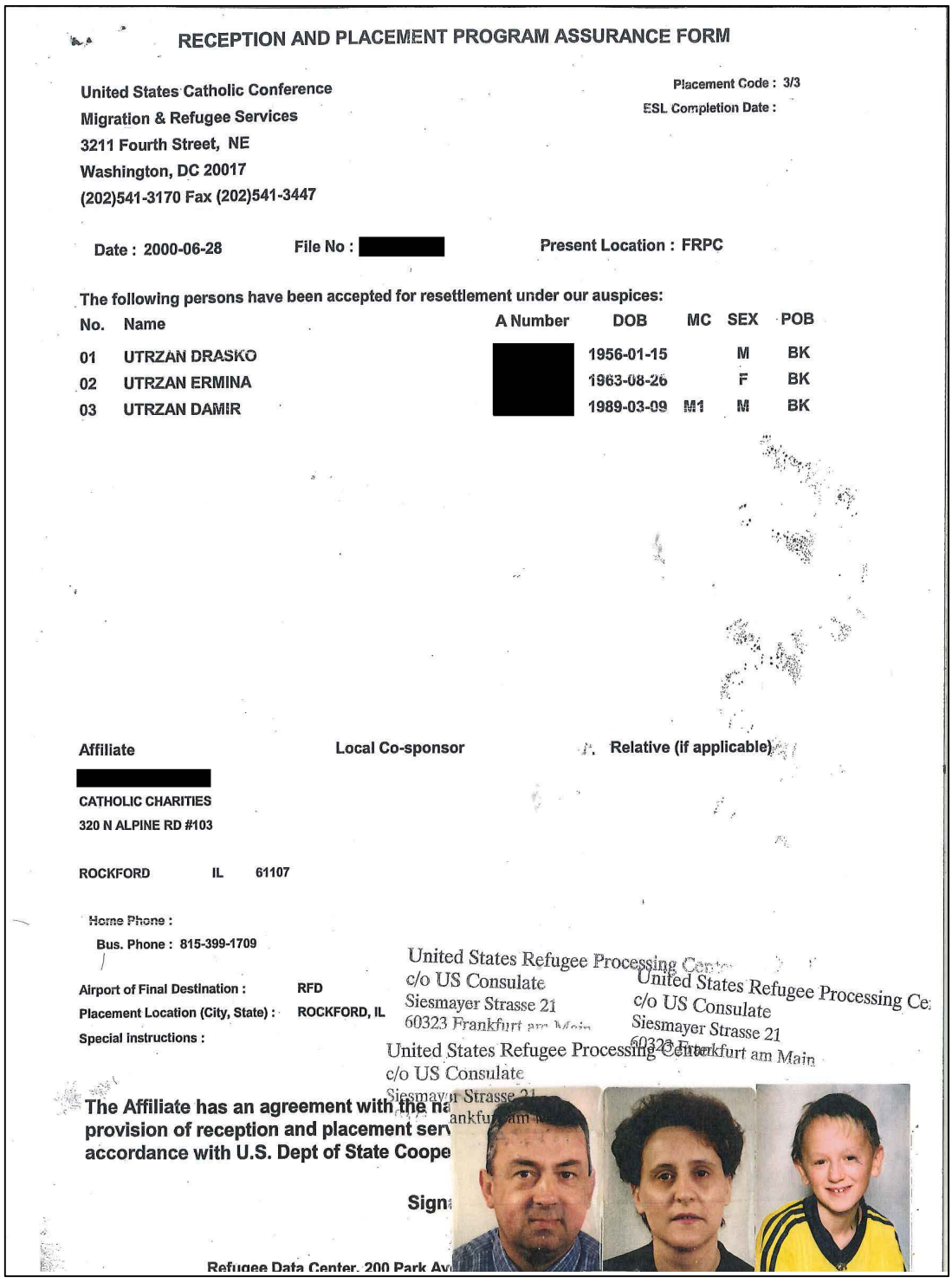


Figure 10. United States map of participant organizations completing survey.

Figure 11. Map of Bosnia and Herzegovina.



RECEPTION AND PLACEMENT PROGRAM ASSURANCE FORM

United States Catholic Conference
Migration & Refugee Services
3211 Fourth Street, NE
Washington, DC 20017
(202)541-3170 Fax (202)541-3447

Placement Code : 3/3
ESL Completion Date :

Date : 2000-06-28 File No : [redacted] Present Location : FRPC

The following persons have been accepted for resettlement under our auspices:

No.	Name	A Number	DOB	MC	SEX	POB
01	UTRZAN DRASKO	[redacted]	1956-01-15		M	BK
02	UTRZAN ERMINA		1963-08-26		F	BK
03	UTRZAN DAMIR		1989-03-09	M1	M	BK

Affiliate

[redacted]
CATHOLIC CHARITIES
320 N ALPINE RD #103

ROCKFORD IL 61107

Home Phone :
Bus. Phone : 815-399-1709

Local Co-sponsor

Relative (if applicable)

Airport of Final Destination : RFD
Placement Location (City, State) : ROCKFORD, IL
Special instructions :

United States Refugee Processing Center
c/o US Consulate
Siesmayer Strasse 21
60323 Frankfurt am Main

United States Refugee Processing Ce
c/o US Consulate
Siesmayer Strasse 21
60323 Frankfurt am Main

United States Refugee Processing Center
c/o US Consulate
Siesmayer Strasse 21
Frankfurt am Main

The Affiliate has an agreement with the na
provision of reception and placement serv
accordance with U.S. Dept of State Coope

Signa

Refugee Data Center, 200 Park Av

Figure 12. Reception and Placement Program Assurances form.

Figure 13. Map of Morocco.

Figure 14. Map of Saudi Arabia.

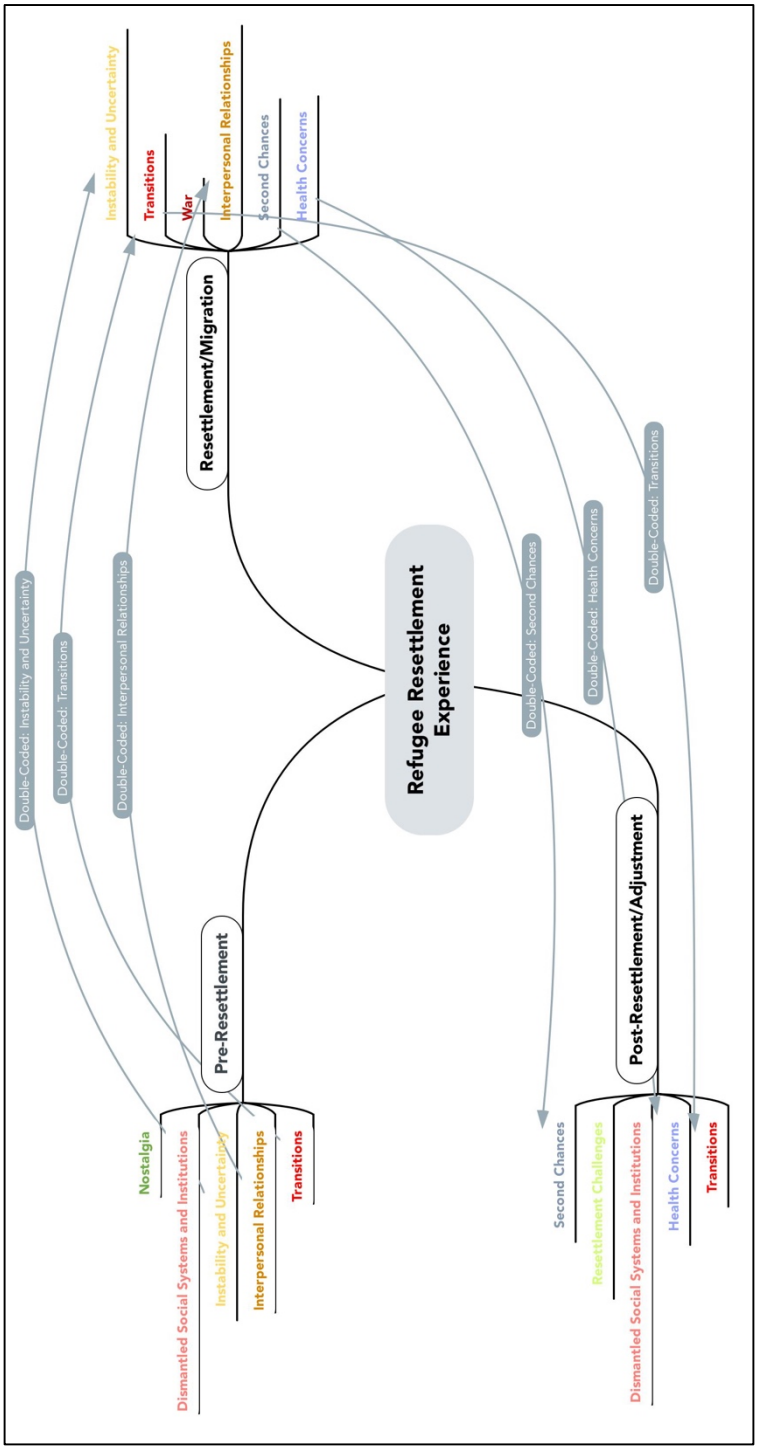


Figure 15. Themes across resettlement stages.

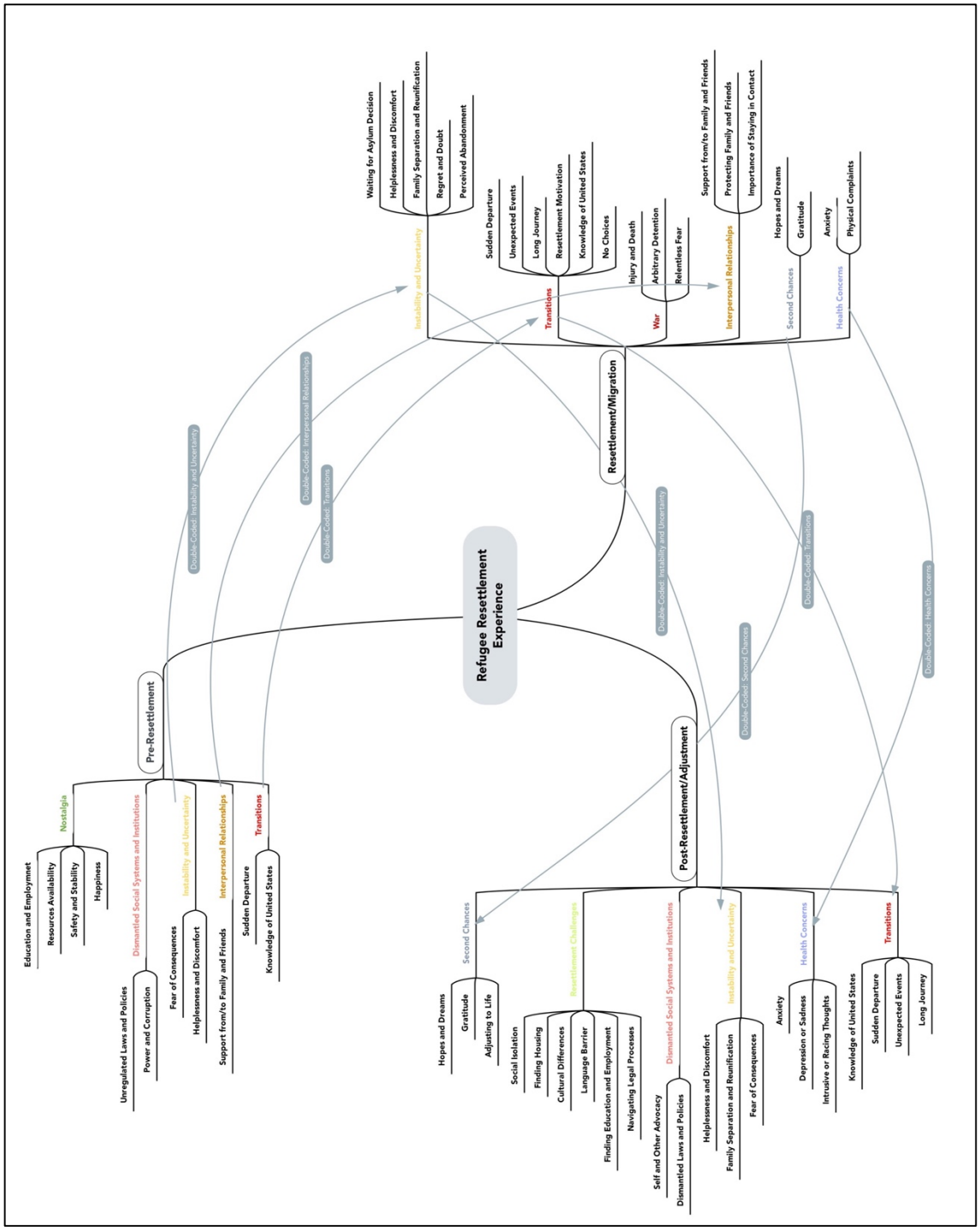


Figure 16. Themes and sub-themes across resettlement stages.

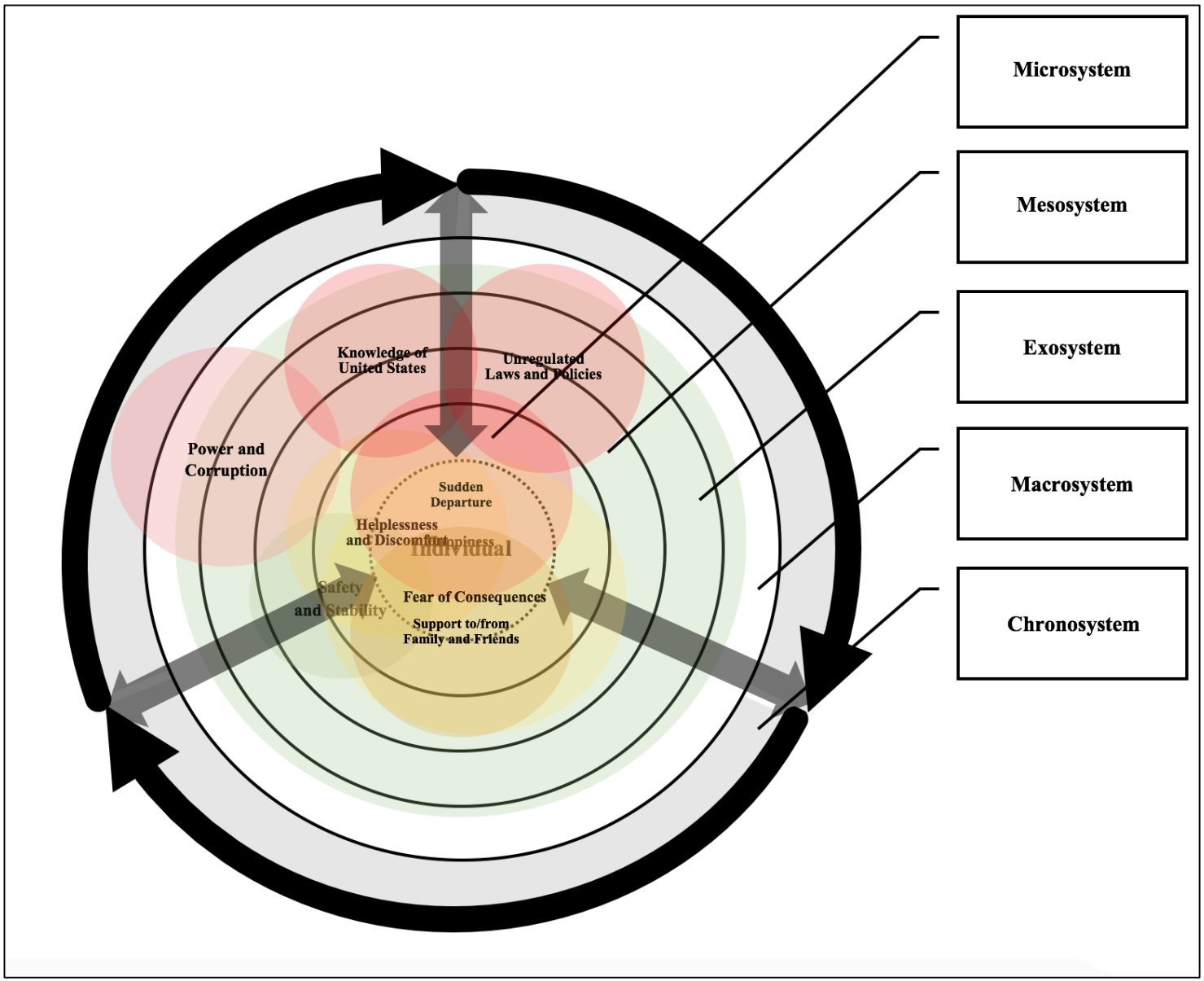


Figure 17. Ecological systems in pre-resettlement stage.

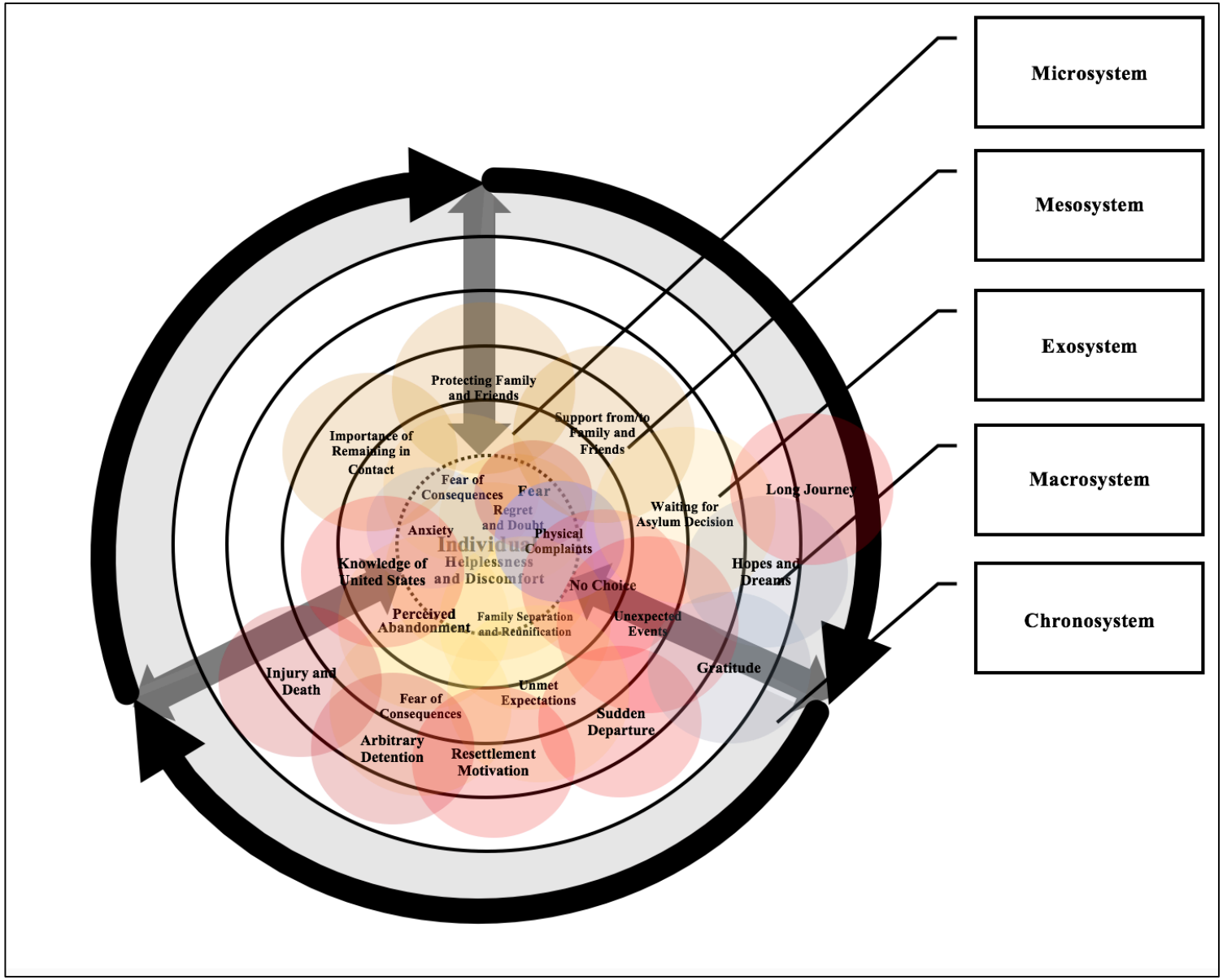


Figure 18. Ecological systems in resettlement/migration stage.

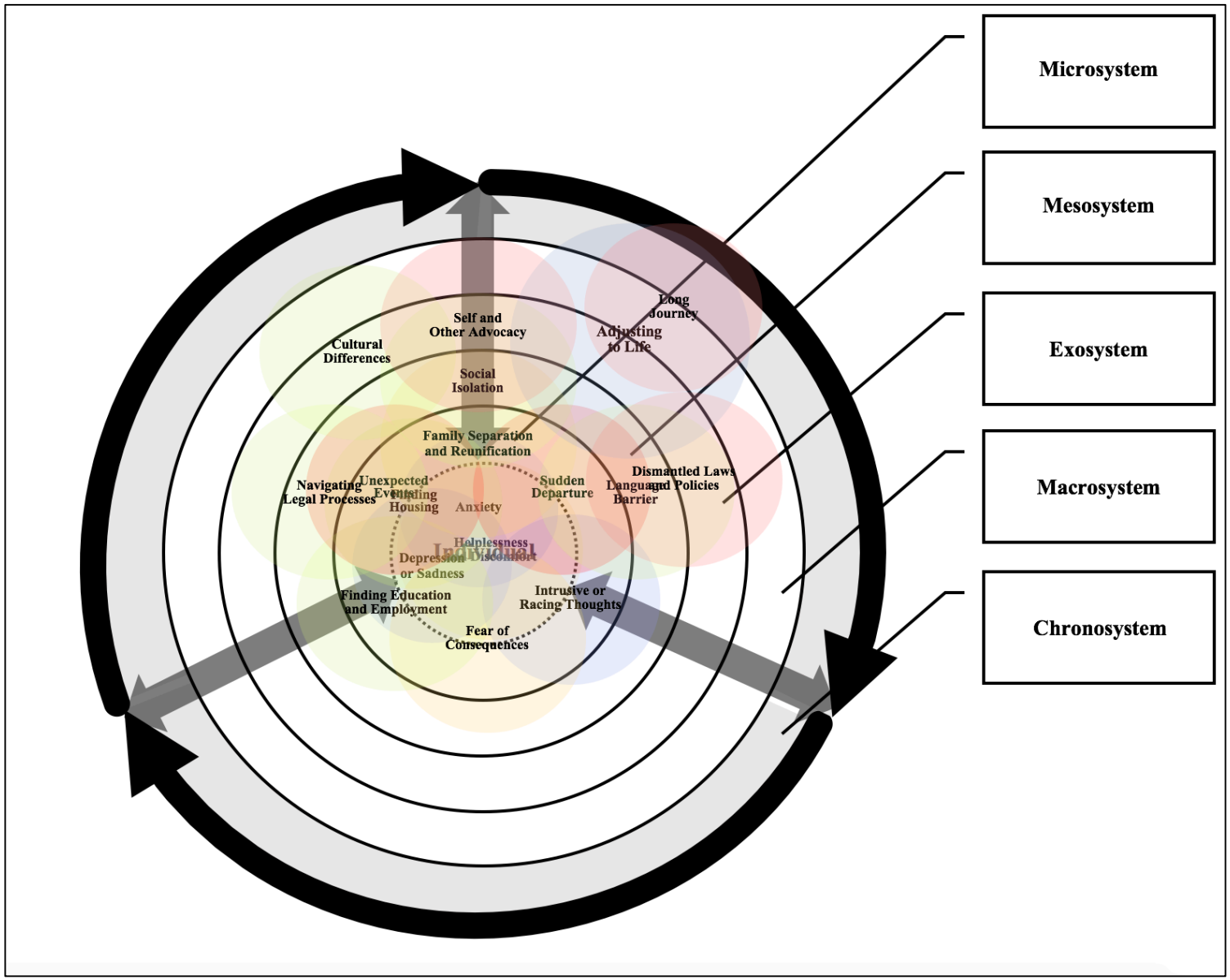


Figure 19. Ecological systems in post-resettlement/adjustment.

Tables

Characteristic	***n***	**%**
Gender		
Men	20	26.7
Women	44	58.7
Prefer Not to Answer	7	9.3
Race/Ethnicity		
Asian	2	2.7
Black	11	14.7
Hispanic/Latino	1	1.3
Two or More Ethnicities	1	1.3
White	49	65.3
Prefer Not to Answer	5	6.7
Primary Language English	42	56.0
Native-Born in U.S.	31	41.3
Education		
High School	1	1.3
Some College	3	4.0
Bachelor's Degree	16	21.3
Master's Degree	27	36.0
Doctoral Degree	2	2.7
Professional Degree	6	8.0
Prefer to Answer	3	4.0

Table 1. Sociodemographic composition of participants.

VOLAG	***n***	**%**
Church World Services (CSW)	8	10.7
Ethiopian Community Development Council (ECDC)	2	2.7
Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM)	1	1.3
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS)	5	7.0
U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI)	10	13.3
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS)	13	17.3
U.S. Conferences of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)	24	32.0
World Relief (WR)	4	5.3
International Rescue Committee (IRC)	4	5.3
	71	94.7

Table 2. Organizational VOLAG affiliation of participants

			Resettlement Estimates	
Region	**n**	**%**	**Refugees**	**Syrians**
South	25	33.3	60,849	2,373
Northeast	22	29.3	42,983	1,469
Midwest	18	24.0	67,803	1,644
West	9	12.0	52,856	1,880

Table 3. Participant organizations by region and resettlement estimates.

Characteristic	***n***	***%***	***M***	***SD***
Gender				
Men	8	66.7		
Women	4	33.3		
Age			35.8	10.7
Marital Status				
Single	5	41.7		
Married	6	50.0		
Divorced	1	8.3		
Education Level				
Grammar School	3	25.0		
High School	5	41.7		
Some College	2	16.7		
Bachelor's Degree	1	8.3		
Professional Degree	1	8.3		
Employment Status				
Unemployed	4	33.3		
Part-Time Employed	2	16.7		
Full-Time Employed	6	50.0		
Interview (Minutes)	903		75.3	27.7
Interview (Hours)	15.5		1.25	0.45

Table 4. Sociodemographic composition of participants.

Characteristic	***n***	***%***	***M***	***SD***
Migration Year			2013	
2010	1	8.3		
2012	1	8.3		
2013	7	58.3		
2014	2	16.7		
2016	1	8.3		
Arrival Year			2015	
2013	1	8.3		
2014	2	16.7		
2016	9	75.0		
Legal Status				
Asylum-Seeker	9	75.0		
Refugee	2	16.7		
Temporary Protected Status	1	8.3		
English Skills				
Proficient	3	25.0		
Intermediate	1	8.3		
Below Basic	7	58.3		
None	1	8.3		

Table 5. Legal status composition of participants.

nension Assessed	Question	Theme(s)	Sub-Theme(s)
nension 1	*How has the resettlement of Syrian refugees been going; what, if anything, needs improvement?*	Inconsistent Resettlement Expectations Non-Problematic Resettlement Process Repairing Resettlement System	Compassionate Resettlement Initiatives Inaccurate Media Portrayal
Organizational Efforts	*What would be a more appropriate measure of performance for refugee resettlement affiliates?*	Holistic Approach	
nension 2	*What would be a more appropriate measure of performance for refugee resettlement affiliates?*	Community Collaboration and Education Affiliate Initiatives	Existing Resettlement Efforts
	Why do members of your community have the knowledge you previously reported?	Media Agency Outreach Workgroups	
Community Efforts	*What are some obstacles to community members participating in current resettlement efforts of Syrian refugees?*	Language Barrier Misunderstanding of Resettlement Process Politicization and Prejudice Insufficient Resources	
	What are some strengths and weaknesses of existing efforts?	Welcoming Community (Strength) Availability of Basic Resources (Strength) Availability of Agency Resources (Strength) Agency/Community Collaboration (Strength) Time Constraints (Weakness) Funding Concerns (Weakness) Resource Concerns (Weakness) Rhetoric of Distrust (Weakness)	

te. Range: 1-5
ble 6. Thematic analysis by dimension.

nension Assessed	Question	Theme(s)	Sub-Theme(s)
nension 3	*How do leaders in your community show their support?*	Advocacy/Outreach Verbal Support Donations Education Collaboration	
Leadership Efforts	*Why is or is not the resettlement of Syrian refugees a concern in your community?*	Welcoming Community Responsibility Benefits of Resettlement Misinformation/Fear	
nension 4	*Why is the resettlement of Syrian refugees in your community at the level you previously indicated?*	Prejudice/Discrimination/Fear/Threat Political Climate Support Expressed Expressed Concern	
	How might community members show their support in expanding the resettlement efforts of Syrian refugees?	Advocacy/Outreach Volunteering Donations Speaking-Out	
Community Climate	*How do community members show their opposition to the resettlement of Syrian refugees?*	Phone Calls Media Community Events Legislation	
	What are some circumstances in which members of the community might not tolerate the resettlement of Syrian refugees?	Fear and Risk/Threat to Security Concerns/Resentment Demographic Change	
nension 5	*What are some misconceptions among community members about the resettlement of Syrian refugees?*	Misunderstanding/Unawareness Drain on Resources Improper Security Screening Fear of Terrorism	Political Rhetoric
Community Knowledge			

Resettlement Effort	***n***	**%**
Housing	52	69.3
Employment	39	52.0
Income Support	36	48.0
Social Orientation	36	48.0
Transportation	33	44.0
Healthcare	29	38.8
Cultural and Religious Support	25	33.3
Other	12	16.0

Table 7. Resettlement effort concerns of participant organizations.

Preparedness	***n***	**%**	***M***	**SD**	**Range**
Extremely Unprepared	1	1.3			
Slightly Prepared	0	0.0			
Somewhat Prepared	14	18.7			
Moderately Prepared	32	42.7			
Extremely Prepared	16	21.3			

Table 8. Participant organization readiness to resettle Syrian refugees.

Resettlement Stage	Ecology	Theme(s)	Sub-Theme(s)
Pre-Resettlement	Individual	Instability and Uncertainty	Fear of Consequences
			Helplessness and Discomfort
		Transitions	Sudden Departure
		Nostalgia	Happiness
	Microsystem	Instability and Uncertainty	Helplessness and Discomfort
		Interpersonal Relationships	Support to/from Family and Friends
	Mesosystem	Nostalgia	Safety and Stability
			Education and Employment
	Exosystem	Nostalgia	Resource Availability
		Instability and Uncertainty	Fear of Consequences
		Transitions	Knowledge of United States
	Macrosystem	Dismantled Social Systems and Institutions	Unregulated Laws and Policies
	Chronosystem	Dismantled Social Systems and Institutions	Power and Corruption
		Nostalgia	Threats to Safety and Stability
Resettlement/ Migration	Individual	Instability and Uncertainty	Helplessness and Discomfort
			Regret and Doubt
			Fear of Consequences
		War	Relentless Fear
		Health Concerns	Anxiety
			Physical Complaints
		Second Chances	Hopes and Dreams
			Gratitude
	Microsystem	Instability and Uncertainty	Family Separation and Reunification
			Perceived Abandonment
		Interpersonal Relationships	Importance of Remaining in Contact
		Transitions	Knowledge of United States
	Mesosystem	Transitions	No Choices
		Interpersonal Relationships	Support to/from Family and Friends
			Protecting Family and Friends

Table 9. Themes and sub-themes by ecological system and resettlement stages.

Resettlement Stage	Ecology	Theme(s)	Sub-Theme(s)
Resettlement/ Migration	Exosystem	Instability and Uncertainty	Waiting for Asylum Decision
			Unmet Expectations
			Fear of Consequences
		Transitions	Unexpected Events
			Sudden Departure
	Macrosystem	Transitions	Resettlement Motivation
			Knowledge of United States
		War	Arbitrary Detention
			Injury and Death
	Chronosystem	Transitions	Long Journey
Post-Resettlement/ Adjustment	Individual	Instability and Uncertainty	Helplessness and Discomfort
			Anxiety
		Health Concerns	Depression or Sadness
			Intrusive or Racing Thoughts
		Second Chances	Gratitude
	Microsystem	Resettlement Challenges	Finding Housing
			Finding Education and Employment
		Transitions	Sudden Departure
			Unexpected Events
	Mesosystem	Instability and Uncertainty	Family Separation and Reunification
			Fear of Consequences
			Social Isolation
	Exosystem	Resettlement Challenges	Language Barrier
			Navigating Legal Processes
		Second Chances	Adjusting to Life
		Resettlement Challenges	Cultural Differences
	Macrosystem	Dismantled Social Systems and Institutions	Self and Other Advocacy
			Unregulated Laws and Policies
		Transitions	Knowledge of United States
	Chronosystem	Transitions	Long Journey
		Second Chances	Hopes and Dreams

Appendices

Appendix A

Introduction and Consent

IRB Study Code: 1609E95285
Version Date: October 30, 2016

Nationwide Needs and Readiness Assessment of the Syrian Refugee Resettlement Infrastructure

As a Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) affiliate, your organization is critical to the nation's refugee resettlement infrastructure. The purpose of this survey is to assess the current infrastructure as it pertains to the resettlement of Syrian refugees. The subsequent questions are organized around five dimensions: (1) efforts; (2) knowledge; (3) leadership; (4) climate; and (5) resources. The estimated time to complete this survey is between 20- and 30-minutes. However, completion time could be shorter or longer depending on your responses. You will be given an option to complete a telephone interview instead at the beginning of this survey. If you have any questions, please contact the researcher(s) Damir S. Utržan, M.S., LAMFT at DUtrzan@umn.edu or Elizabeth A. Wieling, Ph.D., LMFT at LWieling@umn.edu. If you prefer to contact someone other than the researcher(s), you are encouraged to contact the Research Subjects' Advocate Line at IRB@umn.edu or (612) 625-1650. Their mailing address is D528 Mayo, 420 Delaware St., SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455.

By clicking ">>" you agree to voluntarily participate in this survey.

This study is funded in-part by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA) Minority Fellowship Program (MFP) Dissertation Completion Fellowship (DCF).

Option to Complete Telephone Interview

Option to Complete Telephone Interview

Would you like to complete a telephone interview instead of this online survey?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Organization and Professional Qualifications

Organization and Professional Qualifications

The following questions are about your organization and professional qualifications. There are also some questions about your personal attributes, which you are not required to answer. **Answers will be kept confidential and not released in any reports or publications.**

In which state is your organization located?

Which voluntary resettlement agency (VOLAG) is your organization affiliated with?

What is your gender?

- ○ Male
- ○ Female
- ○ Prefer Not to Answer

Please provide your contact information so we can schedule a telephone interview. **This information will not be used for any other purpose.**

Name
Organization
E-Mail
Telephone Number

Current Syrian Refugee Resettlement Efforts

Current Syrian Refugee Resettlement Efforts

The following questions are about your organization's current Syrian refugee resettlement efforts. Efforts include, but are not limited to, any programs, services, or activities.

Has your organization resettled Syrian refugees over the last three years (i.e., 2013-2016)?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Does your organization coordinate with individual schools and/or districts in the resettlement of Syrian refugee children?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Unknown

How has the resettlement of Syrian refugees been going? What, if anything, needs improvement?

What is your ethnicity?

- ○ American-Indian/Alaska Native
- ○ Asian
- ○ Black
- ○ Hispanic/Latino
- ○ Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
- ○ White
- ○ Two or More Ethnicities
- ○ Prefer Not to Answer

What is the highest level of education you completed?

- ○ Grammar School
- ○ High School or Equivalent
- ○ Vocational or Technical School
- ○ Some College
- ○ Bachelor's Degree (e.g., BA, BS)
- ○ Master's Degree (e.g., MA, MS)
- ○ Doctoral Degree (e.g., PhD, DPhil)
- ○ Professional Degree (e.g., JD, MD)
- ○ Prefer Not to Answer

What is your official title at your organization?

Is English your primary language?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Prefer Not to Answer

Were you born in the United States?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Prefer Not to Answer

Does your organization perform mental health assessments as part of the resettlement process in your state?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Unknown

How are mental health referrals handled?

- ☐ Internal
- ☐ External/Community
- ☐ Other
- ☐ No Mental Health Referrals
- ☐ Unknown

How are legal referrals handled?

- ☐ Internal
- ☐ External/Community
- ☐ Other
- ☐ No Legal Referrals
- ☐ Unknown

Are your organization's efforts, priorities, and/or policies to resettle individual refugees or families?

- ○ Individuals
- ○ Families
- ○ Both
- ○ Unknown

Does your organization expect to resettle Syrian refugees in the next three years (i.e., 2017-2020)?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Unknown

The Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) measures performance of resettlement affiliates by how many refugees achieve economic self-sufficiency. This includes, but is not limited to, their educational progress, English language acquisition, and ability to secure employment.

From your organization's perspective, is this a fair measure of performance?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

What would be a more appropriate measure of performance?

Which Syrian refugee resettlement efforts below is your organization concerned with?

- ☐ Housing
- ☐ Transportation
- ☐ Employment
- ☐ Appropriate Cultural/Religious Support

☐ Income Support

☐ Healthcare

☐ Social Orientation

☐ Other

☐ None

On a scale from 1-5, how prepared is your organization to facilitate the resettlement of Syrian refugees, with 1 being "*extremely unprepared*" and 5 being "*extremely prepared*," in your community, that is, town or city?

	Extremely Unprepared				**Extremely Prepared**
	1	2	3	4	5
Preparedness					

Knowledge of Syrian Refugee Resettlement Efforts

Knowledge of Syrian Refugee Resettlement Efforts

In answering the following questions, please keep in mind your organization's perspective of what your community, that is, town or city, knows about resettlement efforts of Syrian refugees.

Are there any Syrian refugee resettlement efforts in your community?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Unknown

What are some of these efforts and how long they have been going on?

About how many of your community members, as a whole, are aware of the following Syrian refugee resettlement aspects?

	None	Few	Some	Many	Most	Unknown
Heard of Efforts	○	○	○	○	○	○
Can Name Efforts	○	○	○	○	○	○
Know Effort Purpose	○	○	○	○	○	○
Know Effort Recipients	○	○	○	○	○	○
Know Effort Use	○	○	○	○	○	○
Know Effort Success	○	○	○	○	○	○

Why do members of your community have the amount of knowledge previously reported?

Are there misconceptions or incorrect information among your community members about current resettlement efforts of Syrian refugees?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Unknown

How do members of your community learn about current resettlement efforts? What are some of the misconceptions and/or incorrect information?

Do community members aware of Syrian refugee resettlement efforts view them as successful?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Unknown

What are some obstacles to community members participating in current resettlement efforts of Syrian refugees?

What are some strengths/weaknesses of existing resettlement efforts?

Are evaluations being conducted and/or used to make changes in current efforts or to start new efforts in your community?

- ○ Yes

- ○ No
- ○ Unknown

Is anyone in your community trying to develop new Syrian refugee resettlement efforts?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Unknown

Leadership of Syrian Refugee Resettlement Efforts

Leadership of Syrian Refugee Resettlement Efforts

The following questions ask about how leadership (i.e., those who could impact the outcome of the issue and have influence in the community and/or help the community in achieving its goals) in your community perceives the resettlement of Syrian refugees.

Who are the leaders that support addressing the resettlement of Syrian refugees in your community? In answering this question, consider four types of leaders:

Official leaders tend to focus on official business of the community, such as policy decisions and economic development. They include, but are not limited to, elected officials.
Civil leaders often represent the interests of a particular group in the community. They include, but are not limited to, the clergy.
Catalysts generally do not have official titles but they represent their community and have insight into issues that people care about. They include, but are not limited to, elders.
Connectors move between organizations and spread ideas. They include, but are not limited to, organizers of grassroots movements.

- ☐ Official Leaders
- ☐ Civil Leaders
- ☐ Catalysts

- [ ] Connectors
- [ ] Other
- [ ] None

In the previous question you identified ${q://QID39/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices} as supporting the resettlement of Syrian refugees. How do they show their support?

Using a scale from 1-10, how much of a concern is the resettlement of Syrian refugees to the leadership of your community, with 1 being "*no concern*" and 10 being a "*great concern*"?

	No Concern									**Great Concern**
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Concern										

Why is/not the resettlement of Syrian refugees a concern in your community?

On a scale from 1-10, how much of a priority is addressing the resettlement of Syrian refugees to supportive/oppositional leadership in your community, with 1 being "*no priority*" and 10 being an "*essential priority*"?

	No Priority									Essential Priority
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Supportive Leadership										
Oppositional Leadership										

Does the leadership support expanded efforts to address the resettlement of Syrian refugees in your community?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Unknown

Are there leaders who may be opposed to the resettlement of Syrian refugees in your community?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Unknown

Community Climate of Syrian Refugee Resettlement

Community Climate of Syrian Refugee Resettlement

The following questions are about the climate of Syrian refugee resettlement in your community, that is, town or city. Answer questions by keeping in mind your organization's perspective of what community members believe and not what you personally believe.

On a scale from 1-10, how much of a concern is the resettlement of Syrian refugees, with 1 being "*no concern*" and 10 being a "*very great concern*," in your community?

No Concern **Very Great Concern**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Concern

Why is the resettlement of Syrian refugees in your community at the level of concern indicated?

On a scale from 1-10, how much of a priority is addressing the resettlement of Syrian refugees to community members, with 1 being "*no priority*" and 10 being an "*essential priority*"?

No Priority **Essential Priority**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Priority

How might community members show their support in expanding the resettlement of Syrian refugees?

Are there community members who oppose or might oppose the resettlement of Syrian refugees?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Unknown

How do community members show their opposition to the resettlement of Syrian refugees?

Are there members of your community that do not tolerate the resettlement of Syrian refugees?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Unknown

What are some circumstances in which members of the community might not tolerate the resettlement of Syrian refugees?

Community Knowledge of Syrian Refugee Resettlement

Community Knowledge of Syrian Refugee Resettlement

The following questions are about your community's knowledge of Syrian refugee resettlement. Answer questions by keeping in mind your organization's perspective of what community members know and not what you personally know.

One a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is "*no knowledge*" and 10 is "*detailed knowledge*," how much do community members know about the resettlement of Syrian refugees?

	No Knowledge									**Detailed Knowledge**
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Knowledge										

About how many of your community members, as a whole, are aware of the following Syrian refugee resettlement efforts?

	None	**Few**	**Some**	**Many**	**Most**	**Unknown**
General	○	○	○	○	○	○
Causes	○	○	○	○	○	○
Consequences	○	○	○	○	○	○

What are some misconceptions among community members about the resettlement of Syrian refugees (e.g., why Syrian refugees resettle, how much occurs locally, what the consequences of resettlement are)?

What type of information is available in your community about the resettlement of Syrian refugees?

- ☐ Newspaper Articles
- ☐ Brochures
- ☐ Posters
- ☐ Events
- ☐ Other
- ☐ None
- ☐ Unknown

Community Resources in Syrian Refugee Resettlement

Community Resources in Syrian Refugee Resettlement

The following questions are about community resources in the resettlement of Syrian refugees. Community resources include, but are not limited to, time, money, people, and space.

Are you aware of any community resources in the resettlement of Syrian refugees?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

How are current community resettlement efforts of Syrian refugees funded?

- ☐ Public (e.g., Government)
- ☐ Private (e.g., Foundation)
- ☐ Other
- ☐ No Funding

☐ Unknown

Are currently funded community efforts likely to continue into the future?

○ Yes
○ No
○ Unknown

The following list is of resources that could be used in the resettlement of Syrian refugees. For each of these, please indicate availability of that resources in your community that could be used.

	None	Few	Some	Many	Most	Unknown
Volunteers	○	○	○	○	○	○
Financial Donations	○	○	○	○	○	○
Grants	○	○	○	○	○	○
Experts	○	○	○	○	○	○
Space	○	○	○	○	○	○

Would community members and leadership support using these resources to address the resettlement of Syrian refugees?

○ Yes
○ No
○ Unknown

On a scale from 1 to 5, how much effort are community members and/or leadership putting into each of the following things to increase the resources going toward the resettlement of Syrian refugees, where 1 is "*no effort*" and 5 is "*great effort*?"

No Effort				Great Effort

	1	2	3	4	5
Seeking volunteers for current or future efforts.					
Soliciting donations from businesses or other organizations to fund current or expanded efforts.					
Writing grant proposals to obtain funding to address efforts.					
Training community members to become experts.					
Recruiting experts in the community.					

Are you aware of any proposals or action plans that have been submitted for funding to address the resettlement of Syrian refugees in your community?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Unknown

What are some of these proposals or actions plans you are aware of?

Appendix B

Refugee Resettlement: Underfunded, Overstretched, and Failing

Dear [PARTICIPANT'S FIRST NAME],

In 2010, the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations noted that "resettlement efforts in many U.S. cities are underfunded, overstretched, and failing to meet the basic needs of the refugee populations." The nationwide resettlement infrastructure is unable to keep up with the increasingly complex needs of refugees. This has never been more evident than with the mass displacement of people from Syria. For this, it is critical to better understand the nation's needs, strengths, assets, and resource gaps related to refugee resettlement. The link below will take you to an anonymous 20-minute online survey. If you prefer a telephone interview instead, please indicate so in the first question. If you are not in the position to answer questions related to the resettlement of Syrian refugees, please forward this e-mail and link to the colleague in your organization who is.

[PERSONALIZED SURVEY LINK]

[PARTICIPANT'S FIRST NAME], you are not required to take this survey. But your organization's perspective is important. If you have any questions, please contact me at DUtrzan@umn.edu. Thank you for your dedication and service to thousands of refugees.

Sincerely,

Damir S. Utržan, M.S., LAMFT
Licensed Associate Marriage and Family Therapist
Doctoral Candidate in Family Social Science
Couple and Family Therapy Specialization
Human Rights Minor

Appendix C

Refugee Resettlement Survey: Challenging Hateful Rhetoric

Dear [PARTICIPANT'S FIRST NAME],

While presidential election is over, its hateful rhetoric will continue to shape refugee resettlement for at least the next four years. In addition, we are experiencing the greatest refugee resettlement challenge in modern history. The mass displacement of people from Syria has become the public representation of this challenge. But with assistance from organizations like yours we can stand up to rhetoric that promotes hate.

[PARTICIPANT'S FIRST NAME], would you be willing to take a short 20-minute online survey on the nation's refugee resettlement infrastructure? Last week I invited 239 organizations across the U.S. to take this survey. Of these invitations, 46 surveys were started and 25 completed. That is a 10% completion rate. We are simply unable to understand the nation's needs, strengths, assets, and resource gaps related to the resettlement of Syrian refugees without your organization's perspective.

Will you make your organization's voice heard and challenge harmful refugee rhetoric? The link below will take you to an anonymous survey. If you prefer a telephone interview instead, please indicate so in the first question. If you are not in the position to answer questions related to the resettlement of Syrian refugees, forward this e-mail and link to the colleague in your organization who is. Although this link is anonymous (i.e., it does not track your identity), you can use it to continue a survey without losing progress.

[PERSONALIZED SURVEY LINK]

If you have any questions, please contact me at DUtrzan@umn.edu. Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Damir S. Utržan, M.S., LAMFT
Licensed Associate Marriage and Family Therapist
Doctoral Candidate in Family Social Science
Couple and Family Therapy Specialization
Human Rights Minor

Appendix D

Refugee Resettlement Survey: Effects of President-elect Trump

Dear [PARTICIPANT'S FIRST NAME],

It has been nearly two weeks since Donald Trump was elected to one of the world's most powerful political positions, President of the United States. Although human rights organizations are unsure how President-elect Trump will shape refugee resettlement in the United States, change is inevitable. It is now more important than ever to better understand the nation's needs and resources related to the resettlement of Syrian refugees.

I am writing to you as a doctoral candidate and former refugee. I previously asked you to take a short 20-minute online survey on your organization's perspective. **This survey is part of my doctoral dissertation. But if I receive enough responses, I will publish the de-identified findings in an academic journal. Otherwise I am happy to share the findings with you.** The link below will take you to an anonymous survey that you can start and stop without losing progress. In addition to multiple-choice answers, detailed responses to open-ended questions are very important. If you are not in the position to answer questions related to the resettlement of Syrian refugees, please forward this e-mail and link to the colleague who is.

[PERSONALIZED SURVEY LINK]

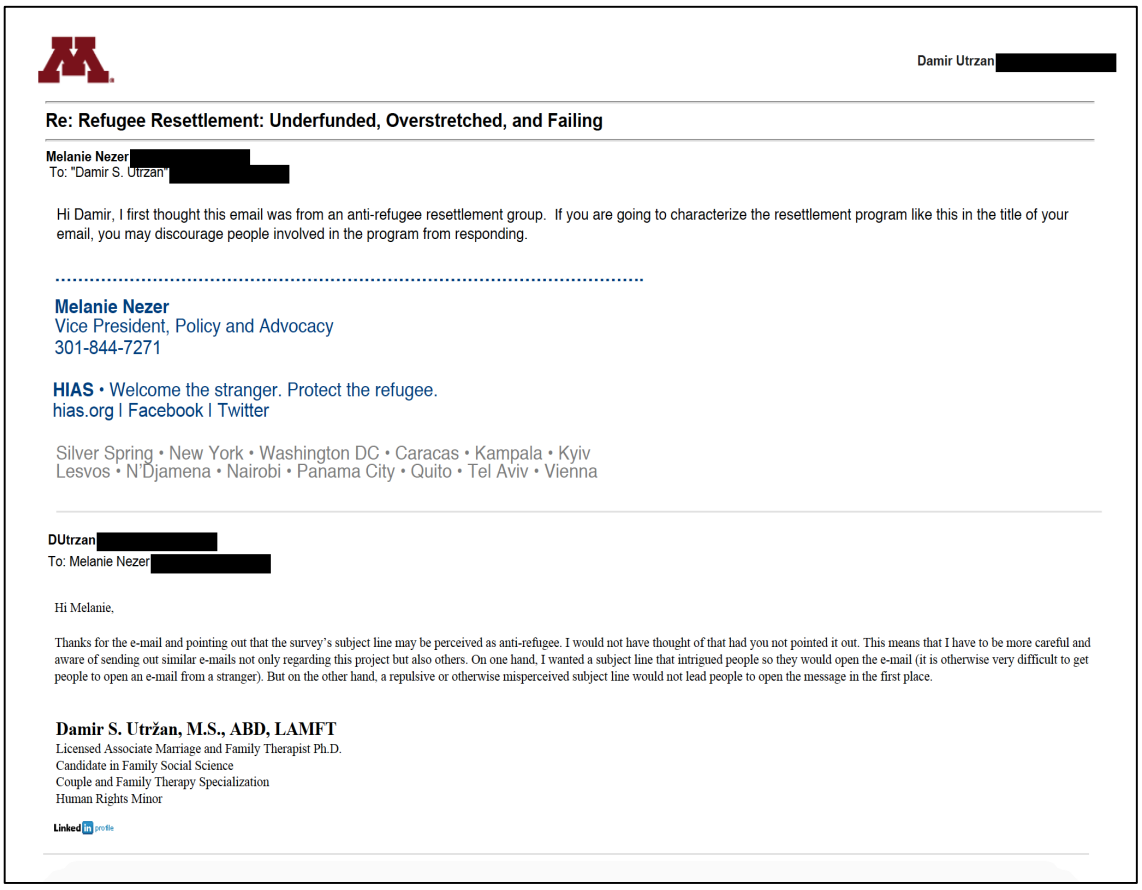
I hope that you will help me fight for the core beliefs on which the United States was founded. If you have any questions, please contact me at DUtrzan@umn.edu. Thank you for your continued support.

You can unsubscribe from receiving these e-mails by clicking [SURVEY OPT-OUT LINK]

Sincerely,

Damir S. Utržan, M.S., LAMFT
Licensed Associate Marriage and Family Therapist
Doctoral Candidate in Family Social Science
Couple and Family Therapy Specialization
Human Rights Minor

Appendix E



Damir Utrzan [redacted]

Re: Refugee Resettlement: Underfunded, Overstretched, and Failing

Melanie Nezer [redacted]
To: "Damir S. Utrzan" [redacted]

Hi Damir, I first thought this email was from an anti-refugee resettlement group. If you are going to characterize the resettlement program like this in the title of your email, you may discourage people involved in the program from responding.

.....

Melanie Nezer
Vice President, Policy and Advocacy
301-844-7271

HIAS • Welcome the stranger. Protect the refugee.
hias.org | Facebook | Twitter

Silver Spring • New York • Washington DC • Caracas • Kampala • Kyiv
Lesvos • N'Djamena • Nairobi • Panama City • Quito • Tel Aviv • Vienna

DUtrzan [redacted]
To: Melanie Nezer [redacted]

Hi Melanie,

Thanks for the e-mail and pointing out that the survey's subject line may be perceived as anti-refugee. I would not have thought of that had you not pointed it out. This means that I have to be more careful and aware of sending out similar e-mails not only regarding this project but also others. On one hand, I wanted a subject line that intrigued people so they would open the e-mail (it is otherwise very difficult to get people to open an e-mail from a stranger). But on the other hand, a repulsive or otherwise misperceived subject line would not lead people to open the message in the first place.

Damir S. Utržan, M.S., ABD, LAMFT
Licensed Associate Marriage and Family Therapist Ph.D.
Candidate in Family Social Science
Couple and Family Therapy Specialization
Human Rights Minor

LinkedIn profile

Appendix F

Refugee Resettlement Survey: Final Participation Request

Dear [PARTICIPANT'S FIRST NAME],

I hope this e-mail finds you well. It has been one month since I invited you to participate in a survey on the nation's needs and resources related to Syrian refugee resettlement. With help of organizational leaders like you, more than 50 surveys have been completed thus far. I know that you are busy, particularly this time of year, but I am writing a final request for your participation in a 20-minute online survey on your organization's perspective. **There are two reasons I am making this request.**

First, the confirmation of President-elect Trump makes understanding the refugee resettlement infrastructure more important than it was last month. **Second**, several attempts at a ceasefire in Syria have failed such that evacuation of innocent civilians has been suspended.

This survey is part of my doctoral (i.e., Ph.D.) dissertation. I will publish the de-identified findings in an academic journal and make them freely available to the refugee resettlement community. The link below will take you to an anonymous survey that you can start and stop without losing progress. In addition to multiple-choice answers, detailed responses to open-ended questions are very important. If you are not in the position to answer questions related to the resettlement of Syrian refugees, please forward this e-mail and link to the colleague who is.

[PERSONALIZED SURVEY LINK]

Thank you for preserving and protecting the rights of refugees nationwide. If you have any questions, please contact me at DUtrzan@umn.edu.

You can unsubscribe from receiving these e-mails by clicking [SURVEY OPT-OUT LINK]

Sincerely,

Damir S. Utržan, M.S., LAMFT
Licensed Associate Marriage and Family Therapist
Doctoral Candidate in Family Social Science
Couple and Family Therapy Specialization
Human Rights Minor

How has the resettlement of Syrian refugees been going; what, if anything, needs improvement?						
Possible Quote	**Raw Data**	**Initial Coding**	**Focused Coding**	**Theoretical Coding**	**Memo(s)**	**Basic Theme(s)**
	"Resettlement of Syrians has been going very smoothly. The biggest challenge is in the irregular arrival patterns[;] few arrivals in the beginning of the year and high numbers in the summer. The Syrians we have resettled have been very gracious and patient with our resettlement efforts in the midst of heavy arrivals."	Smoothly Gracious Patient	Resettlement of Syrian refugees has been going "smoothly" despite challenges.	Organization acknowledges challenges in the resettlement process of Syrian refugees, which may be indiciative of refugee resettlement as a whole (i.e., the system).	Tone of response is positive. Organization acknowledges challenges to resettlement process but does not appear to attribute them to the Syrian refugees.	**Compassionate Syrian Resettlement**
✓	"So far, no problems reported from any of the service sectors with whom we collaborate ([e.g.,] medical, mental health, schools, [and] social service[s])."	No Problems Collaborate	Organization not received reports of Syrian refugee resettlement challenges from other service sectors.	No reports of resettlement challenges from other service sectors appears may be an indicator of no challenges altogether.	Tone of response is somewhat removed; in other words, there is no emotion in response. This may not be inherently negative, however.	**Non-Problematic Syrian Resettlement**
	"Why the particular focus on Syrians? [Refugee resettlement] agencies serve all refugees, asylees, VOTs, Cubans/Haitians, and SIVs. The structure of the various programs has an impact on all clients. The entire [United States] resettlement program needs a major overhaul and re-think."	Focus Structure Various Programs Major Overhaul Re-Think	Organization acknowledged Syrian refugees but comments on refugee resettlement process (i.e., system) as a whole.	Alludes to importance to re-evaluate refugee resettlement system in the U.S. not just given the current Syrian refugee crisis.	Tone of response is frustrated (i.e., frustration); organization may be struggling with resettlement process as a whole rather than just with Syrian refugees.	**Repairing Resettlement System**
	"Despite much media frenzy, very few Syrians were resettled."	Media Frenzy Few Syrians	Organization acknowledged impact of; potentially negative, media portrayals of refugee resettlement - and - its inconsistency with their experience.	The organization's experience (i.e., reality) is removed from media portrayal of Syrian refugee resettlement, and thus, the public's perception. The latter being either positive or negative.	Responses thus far are on extremes of spectrum of emotion (i.e., only one has been neutral).	**Syrian Media Portrayals**
✓	"Has been going well."	Going Well	Organization's resettlement of Syrian refugees has been going well.	Organization's response does not lend much to theoretical interpretation.	Unclear what going well encompasses (i.e., which parts of the resettlement process are going well).	**Non-Problematic Syrian Resettlement**
✓	"It has been hard to resettle the Syrian refugees due to their expectations around accepted housing, financial support, and lack of willingness to complete required services in a timely manner."	Hard to Resettle Expectations Lack of Willingness Timely	It has been "hard" for organization to resettle Syrian refugees given their "expectations" around resource availability and "lack of willingness" to complete requirements "timely."	From the perspective of ambigous loss theory, Syrian refugees "expectations" and "lack of willingness" to complete requirements "in a timely manner" may reflect their uncertainty of the future, in addition to, an attempt to stand up for themeselves. Regarding the former, they may have arguably become comfortable with "uncertainty" in response to violence and persecution. And regarding the latter, they may view the U.S. as a place where people can stand up for themselves and their beliefs. This is particularly relevant given the historic emphasis on individual rights and liberties in the U.S.	Distrust comes to mind when reading organization's response. They are frustrated with the expectations Syrian refugees have and their unwillingness to complete requirements in a timely manner."These, however, may be two sides of the same coin (i.e., interrelated). Also, Syrian refugees are generally distrustful of government organizations; given al-Asad's regime, which may be facilitating a cycle of distrust and frustration.	**Inconsistent Resettlement Expectations** **Difficult Syrian Resettlement**
✓	"The United States' commitment to bring in 10,000 Syrians was not accompanied by an increase in funding or capacity for the resettlement program. Resettlement agencies are expected to meet these numbers within existing capacity, something already stretched to its limits. We are struggling to find adequate housing and jobs and cannot support refugees for as long as it takes to become self-sufficient. The program is facing community backlash because it is seemingly setting up refugees to languish in welfare systems and poverty. Resettlement workers are frustrated because they are unable to help those they serve and refugees are angry that their expectations of the program are not being met."	Commitment Funding or Capacity Expected Stretched to its Limits Struggling Cannot Support Refugees Self-Sufficient Community Backlash Languish in Welfare Systems/Poverty Frustrated Unable Angry Expectations	Organization is frustrated with Syrian refugee resettlement process but not refugees themselves. Increased U.S. "commitment" to resettle Syrian refugees - at least prior to the presidential election - did not accompany increased "funding or capacity." Organization is "expected" to do more with essentially less although it's already "stretched to its limits" and "struggling." These circumstances prevent the organization from "supporting refugees" until they become economically "self-sufficient," which is a measure of success by the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). These circumstances have led to "community back lash," contributed to Syrian refugees "languish[ing] in welfare and poverty;" and "frustrat[ion]" between organization and refugees over "expectations."	Cycle of distrust has essentially wedged resettlement affilaite between Syrian refugees and the community. The former is frustrated with their expectations not being met where as the latter views Syrian refugees as becoming(?) dependent on the welfare system.	Similar to previous organization's response, frustration" over expectations" and reality have led to cycle of distrust between not only the organization and Syrian refugees but also the community.	**Repairing Resettlement System** **Difficult Syrian Resettlement** **Inconsistent Resettlement Expectations** **Syrian Resettlement Frustration**

✓	"Individual families are nice and tightknit. Families have high expectations of agency support that does not match reality. Moms typically stay ([i.e., are] stuck) at home with or without children, women [are] not going to English [classes and] [m]en, in most cases, agree to take low level survival jobs. Most buy cars before economically advised; some complain they can't make rent, but have already bought a car. High increase in community interest in helping. Agency seeks to expand volunteer program in scope and building in more policies and procedures to ensure that volunteers understand and abide by agency messaging and do not create problems with landlords, employers and other key stakeholders. Also, continue to build partnership with local Muslim community."	Tightnit High Expectations of Agency Support Not Match Reality Increase in Community Interest Expand Volunteer Program More Policies and Procedures Build Parternship	Organization is unable to meet "high expectations" of "support," which "do not match reality," by Syrian refugees. There is an increase in "community interest," and thus need to "expand volunteer program," but this also requires expansion of "policies and procedures" while continuing to "build partnership[s]."	Organization appears to experience challenges, as in high "expectations" from Syrian refugees, but also "increased community interest" in helping.	Respondent noted that the high expectations of Syrian refugees does not match the reality, and thus, the organization's resources. But given the community interest in helping, this makes me wonder whether the media's generally negative portrayal of Syrian refugees does not match community support or at least their desire to help.	**Repairing Resettlement System** **Inconsistent Resettlement Expectations** **Community Interest in Syrian Resettlemetn**
	"It is going ok. Syrian refugees are coming with medical needs and are expecting, [in addition to], sometimes needing to have medical care very quickly. Unless it is a real emergency, we can usually get primary care [appointments] 2-3 weeks out (which many people feel is not soon enough). Also, we help the families apply for Medicaid within the first 7 days in the [United States]. [B]ut processing times for Medicaid to become active can be up to 45 days, which can cause delays and challenges in getting people in to see doctors."	Going Ok Medical Needs Expection Sometimes Needing Very Quickly Delays and Challenges	Organization views resettlement process as "going ok." Syrian refugees have medical needs, and "sometimes," need care "quickly". Regardless of need, however, there are "delays and challenges."	Delays of medical insurance, and thus care, appear due to resettlement process or system rather than anything the organization is doing. This intruduces another element of uncertainty but on the shoulder of the resettlement affiliate and not the refugees.	Delays and challenges regarding medical care, which may be necessary, could be inconsistent with refugees' perception of resource availabiltiy in the U.S. It may also be due to what they are told during pre-resettlement orientation overseas, which I have heard during interviews.	**Repairing Resettlement System** **Inconsistent Resettlement Expectations**
	"They have been problematic. Lacking antecedents ([i.e.,] predecessors), it seems they have no source of information that what the local resettlement agency tells them is accurate. No doubt they've been traumatized, but some have manifested immediate hostility. Serious medical issues appear to be above the norm. We are in a state that has not expanded Medicaid and has, it would seem, slowed down processing even for the clearly eligible."	Problematic Lacking Antecedents Traumatized Immediate Hostility Serious Medical Issues Slowed Down Processing	Organiation views resettlement of Syrian refugees as "problematic" because there is no existing community. Syrians are "traumatized" but "immediate[ly]" hostile in response to their sometimes "serious medical issues" not being addressed.	Delays of medical insurance, and thus care, appear due to resettlement process or system rather than anything the organization is doing.	Response reflects frustration on part of the resettlement affiliate. It is understandable why, particularly given high prevalence of physical and psychological trauma, but attribution of immediate hostiltiy is surprising (i.e., trauma manfiests in emotion dysregulation, and thus, hostility). Refugees also appear to be advocating for themselves, which they were likely unable to do in Syria.	**Difficult Syrian Resettlement** **Repairing Resettlement System**
	"The communication around expectations involving assistance and employment. Many of the refugees hear that agencies will pay rent for several months and that they can receive cash and other benefits a[t] the same time."	Communication Expectations Assistance and Employment Hear	There is "[mis]communication" between "expectations" of Syrian refugees and the organization's ability (i.e., reality).	Ongoing frustration between resettlement organization and refugees due to mis-communication over expectations.	Similar to previous organization's response, mis-communication over resettlement expectations may be due to what refugees are hearing during pre-resettlement orientation. During interviews, some refugees have said that their decision to resettle to the U.S. may have been different had they more accurate information (e.g., number of people allowed in one apartment).	**Challenging Syrian Resettlement** **Inconsistent Resettlement Expectations** **Revising Orientation**
	"We have not had any Syrian clients to date, however we are expecting to resettle Syrian clients in the coming year."	Expecting	Organization has not resettled Syrian refugees but "expect[ed]"; again, before the presidential election, to receive refugees next year (i.e., 2017).	N/A	Organization has not resettled Syrian refugees but respondent completed survey nontheless, which may reflect dedication to population in question.	**Inconsistent Resettlement Expectations**
✓	"Clients have very high expectations and are suspicious of the staff and agency working with them. It is difficult to find suitable housing for large families. Clients have very high expectations and are suspicious of the staff and agency working with them. It is difficult to find suitable housing for large families."	High Expectations Suspicious of Staff and Agency Difficult	Syrian refugees have high resettlement "expectations" but their "distrust of the organization" and its "staff" makes collaboration "difficult."	N/A	Similar to previous organization's response, resettlement challenges appear due to distrust between affilaite and refugees. But this is consistent with their experiences in Syria where everything is government-owend. Thus, a certain level of distrust is to be expected and a "normal response" given the circumstances.	**Challenging Syrian Resettlement** **Inconsistent Resettlement Expectations**

	"Doing well so far. They are a little more contrary than the average refugee, but with a little time and loving attention they realize we really are here for them and they have a lot to learn."	Well Contrary Time and Loving Attention Realize A Lot to Learn	Organization's resettlement of Syrian refugees has been "well" thus far, which may be due to mis-communication between their expectations and the organization's ability to meet them.	While resettlement affiliate acknowledges similar challenges as other respondents, they highlight that these are due to mis-communication. Moreover, the affiliate notes that "time and loving attention" helps refugees "realize" these challenges.	Interesting that this affiliate reported similar challenges as other agencies but did not take a negative position or one of frustration, which would make sense given increasing demands and similar - or even less - availability of resources from the government.	**Non-Problematic Syrian Resettlement** **Compassionate Syrian Resettlement**
	"We feel that, although different, our over 5 years of experience working with Iraqi refugees has assisted us in better caring for refugees from this region. We struggle with very high expectations, such as wanting cars, etc."	Although Different Assisted Us Better Caring Struggle Very High Expectations	Organization felt prepared to work with Syrian refugees by working with refugees from Iraq for five years. Nontheless, they acknowledge challenges due to "very high expectations" regarding resettlement resources.	N/A	Similar to previous organization's response, affiliate reported similar challenges as other agencies but appear to be handling them differently; perhaps even more effectively.	**Challenging Syrian Resettlement** **Inconsistent Resettlement Expectations**
	"Pre-arrival orientation [and] realistic management of client expectations"	Pre-Arrival Orientation Realistic Management Client Expectations	N/A	Ongoing theme of frustration due to incorrect pre-resettlement orientation overseas. Organization in the U.S. is left to deal with unrealisitc expectations of Syrians, while, trying to manage declining availability of resources.	Affiliate directly notes that challenges with Syrian refugee resettlement are due to pre-arrival orientation. Other organizations alluded to that but made no direct reference.	**Inconsistent Resettlement Expectations** **Revising Orientation**
	"Not as well as other populations. Expectations are much higher for housing than they can afford on public assistance."	Not As Well Expectations Much Higher	Organization acknowledged that resettlement of Syrian refugees as not been going "as well" compared to other groups due to unrealistic and "much higher...expectations."	N/A	The ongoing concern over pre-resettlement orientation overseas makes me wonder what is covered and whether there are differences between sites, presenters, etc.	**Challenging Syrian Resettlement** **Inconsistent Resettlement Expectations**
	"Going great, treated the same as other refugees with different population."	Going Great Same Refugees Different Population	Organization views resettlement process as "going great" and no different from other refugee groups.	N/A	Affiliate did not report and challenges with Syrian refugee resettlement. However, their response alludes to treatment (i.e., whether they treat Syrian refugees different compared to other groups) rather than any challenges.	**Non-Problematic Syrian Resettlement**
	"There have been no unusual issues thus far."	No Unusual Issues Thus Far	Organization reported "no unusual issues…thus far."	N/A	Response may reflect that organization expects unique resettlement issues to Syrian refugees although they have not experienced/had any thus far.	**Non-Problematic Syrian Resettlement**
	"Extended cultural orientation is needed."	Extended Cultural Orientation	Organization's primary concern, from their response, is the need for an "extended cultural orientation" for Syrian refugees.	Emerging theme of pre-resettlement cultural orientation as a contributing factor to post-resettlement challenges, such as expectations regarding availability of resources.	N/A	**Revising Orientation**
	"It is going well, same as with other refugees."	Going Well Same	Resettlement of Syrian refugees has been "going well" and the "same" as other groups.	Emerging theme of discrimination(?).	N/A	**Non-Problematic Syrian Resettlement**
	"There is no big differences between refugees from Syria or other origins. We provide services regardless which country or origin people come for our services."	No Big Difference Provide Services Regardless	"No big difference" between resettlement of Syrian refugees and other groups. Moreover, organization provides services regardless of country of origin.	Ongoing theme of discrimination, or at least not wanting to be perceived as discriminating against refugees from Syria or treating them differently, while expressing frustration over working with them.	Similar to another organization's response, this affiliate noted that they do not treat Syrian refugees differently from other groups. The word that keeps coming to mind is "discrimination," or at least perception thereof.	**No Resettlement Difference**
	"We just resettled one large family."	Just Resettled	Organization has only resettled one large family.	N/A	Interesting that affiliate completed relatively extensive survey 100% although they have only resettled one large family from Syria. Also, makes me wonder what they consider "large" given the discrepancy between organizational expectations.	**No Reference Point**
	"We haven't observed anything different than our other refugee cases."	Haven't Observed Anything Different	N/A	N/A	N/A	**No Resettlement Difference**

	"There are very high expectations on the part of the new arrivals and this is causing issues with their resettlement. Particularly in terms of management of welcome money, purchase of goods on clients[']behalf, work available, going to English class instead of work (rather than concurrently) and most of all, housing ([i.e.,] location, type, neighbors ([i.e.,] race, socio-economic class, dog owners, etc[.]))."	Very High Expectations Issues Management	Organization attributes resettlement-related issues to "very high expectations" that Syrian refugees have. These expectations are primarily due to, from the organization's perspective, to "management" of resources.	Ongoing theme of pre-resettlement cultural orientation as a contributing factor to post-resettlement challenges, such as expectations regarding availability of resources.	In addition to making me wonder about discrepancies in pre-resettlement orientation, I wonder whether resettlement agencies do not acknowledge challenges inherent to their organizational structure or capacity.	**Inconsistent Resettlement Expectations**
	"We have only received Syrian refugees in the last four months and the number is relatively small ([i.e.,] 64 individuals) compared to some of our other populations. Thus far, we've seen some challenges that exist within other refugee populations as well [such as,] unrealistic expectations regarding the duration of financial assistance, some resistance to quick, entry-level employment, verbal confrontations with case managers, etc. Also, because these clients arrived during the 4th quarter surge, most spent a few weeks in hotels prior to having an apartment secured for them, which only added to some natural frustration.	Relatively Small Some Challenges Unrealistic Expectations Resistance Natural Frustration	Again, organization reports unrealistic expectations on the part of Syrian refugees.	Ongoing theme of frustration due to inaccurate post-resettlement expectations, which the organization emphasizes is consistent across different refugee groups and not just Syrians.	Organization considers "64 individuals" as "relatively small," although it's considerably higher than other estimates nationwide. This may allude to the organization expecting to resettle more Syrians than they have, at least the time of their response.	**Challenging Syrian Resettlement** **Inconsistent Resettlement Expectations** **Syrian Resettlement Frustration**
	"Lutheran Social Service of [state redacted] has not resettled any Syrian refugees as of yet. [State redacted] has not been a prime destination for Syrian refugees since there are no Syrian community in [state redacted] currently."	Not a Primary Destination No Syrian Community	Organization has not resettled Syrian refugees because their location does not have an existing community.	Emerging theme of Syrians being resettled to locations with an existing community.	N/A	**No Reference Point**
	"Increases [resettlement and placement] stipend to cover basic needs including housing, increased cash assistance from state contracts, tailored orientation to work standards in U.S."	Increases [in] Stipend Tailored Orientation	Organization views resettlement challenges as being due to more Syrian refugees but no accompanying "increase" in funding. Also emphasizes importance of "tailored orientation" in regard to post-resettlement employment expectations.	N/A	I am unsure whether need for tailored orientation refers to pre- or post-resettlement. If the latter, it is different from other organization's concerns.	**Repairing Resettlement System** **Revising Orientation**
	"There have been no noticeable or measurable differences between Syrian refugees and the overall refugee population that comes through this office."	No Noticable Differences No Measurable Differences	Organization has not seen any "noticable" or "measurable" differences between Syrian refugees and other groups.	Ongoing theme of no difference between Syrian refugees and other groups being resettled by affiliate.	I wonder about "measurable differences" and whether the response is a figure of speech or refers to actual assessment by organization.	**No Resettlement Difference**
	"So far, so good. No major problems with [city redacted] showing welcome. We are very fortunate."	So Far, So Good No Major Problems Welcome Fortunate	The city in which the organization is located has been "welcoming" to Syrian refugees. But interesting that they reference being "fortunate," which alludes to another extreme of being "unfortuante" in regard to a welcoming community.	N/A	Reference to being "very fortunate" may be in response to community backlash of Syrian refugee resettlement, as noted by another affiliate, or negative media portrayals.	**No Resettlement Difference**
	"Most in FY16, a few in FY14 and [FY]15. Anything I say applies to all refugees. Although each population has different cultural and experiential nuances, the strategies, approaches and services that work for Syrians also work for all refugee populations. They all deserve even stronger services and community connections."	Applies to All Refugees Deserve Stronger Services Community Connections	Although organization notes that resettlement challenges are not unique to Syrian refugees, they also emphasize that Syrians deserve stronger community connections. This may be due to, as noted previously, perception of discrimination or negative media portrayals.	N/A	N/A	**Compassionate Syrian Resettlement**
	"Our agency has resettled a small number of Syrian refugees, approximately 30. It has been a pleasure serving Syrians, as they are truly grateful for our assistance and are nothing like how the negative media has portrayed them."	Small Number Pleasure Serving Truly Grateful Nothing Like Negative Media Portrayed	Organization resettled "small number" of refugees from Syria but it's been a "pleasure serving" them because they are "truly grateful" and "nothing like" the "negative media portrayals."	Consistent with theme of Syrian refugees not being what the media, and thus the general public, makes them out to be. But, different from other resettlement affiliates, this organization finds pleasure in working with Syrians.	I wonder why this resettlement affilaite enjoys working with Syrians, and their experience(s) are different), compared to the majority of other organizations.	**Compassionate Syrian Resettlement** **Syrian Media Portrayals**
	"We have a very low number of Syrian refugee resettled and it's been going well."	Very Low Number Going Well	N/A	N/A	N/A	**Non-Problematic Syrian Resettlement**
	"Is going very well."	Very Well	N/A	N/A	N/A	**Non-Problematic Syrian Resettlement**
	"Expecting first Syrian refugee family on 12/22/16."	Expecting	N/A	N/A	I wonder whether this organization resettled the family they were expecting and if they encountered any changes following the presidential election.	**No Reference Point**

	"Ongoing. Orientation videos available for families. Understanding of how employment works in the [United States]."	Ongoing Orientation Understanding		Ongoing theme of orientation, seeingly post-resettlement orientation, being a critical component of the process.	I wonder about the videos available to recent refugee arrivals (i.e., what are they, who produced them, what is their intended goal/purpose, etc.)	**Inconsistent Resettlement Expectations** **Revising Orientation**
	"Normal." "We have only had one Syrian family resettled here. It is going well. We are a [United States] Tie-based program only, which results in small numbers."	Normal Going Well Tie-Based Program Small Numbers	N/A Resettlement of Syrian refugees has been "going well" and the "small number" of refugees they have resettled thus far is consistent with being a "tie-based program."	N/A Ongoing theme of refugee resettlement to location with an infrastructure.	N/A I wonder how many members are in the family this organization resettled. Also, this is the first mention of the tie-based program (i.e., refugees are generally resettled to location with existing family, community, or availability of culture-specific resurces).	**Non-Problematic Syrian Resettlement** **No Reference Point**
✓	"Resettlement has been routine per resettlement of other populations."	Routine	N/A	Ongoing theme of Syrian refugee resettlement being similar to that of other groups.	Organization's response suggests that resettlement of Syrian refugees is consistant with other groups they have resettled.	**Non-Problematic Syrian Resettlement**
	"Going fine."	Fine	N/A	N/A	N/A	**Non-Problematic Syrian Resettlement**
	"We have not received any."	Not Received Any	N/A	N/A	N/A	**No Reference Point**
	"It's been going well."	Going Well	N/A	N/A	Short resettlement status responses range from, "not received any," "routine," and "ongoing" to "fine," "well," and "okay."	**Non-Problematic Syrian Resettlement**
✓	"Overseas orientation needs to be broaden [so] they exactly understand what can be realistic expectation in United States and how this process support all refugees to integrate into local communities. The seems to be struggling to understand that [United States] [r]esettlement is the support available for them to be self-sufficient. Mostly Syrian refugees we resettled seem to think that they have to have everything free and their life standard expectations are not realistic to American people either."	Overseas Orientation Broadened Realistic Expectation Process Integrate Struggling Support Self-Sufficient Standard Expectations No Realistic	Organization emphasizes importance of pre-resettlement orientation overseas being expanded to curb, from their perception, post-resettlement challenges. Organization also notes that Syrian refugees have higher expectations not only compared to other refugees but also native-born Americans.	Ongoing theme of expanding pre-resettlement orientation to (adequately?) cover post-resettlement expectations.	N/A	**Challenging Syrian Resettlement** **Inconsistent Resettlement Expectations** **Revising Orientation** **Syrian Resettlement Expectations**

Hollistic Summary

Four major and two minor themes emerged in response to affiliate leadership being asked, "How has the resettlement of Syrian refugees been going; what, if anything, needs improvement?" The first major theme, "inconsistent resettlement expectations," includes affiliate (e.g., more refugees but less funding) and refugee expectations (e.g., distribution of resources, such as housing). As noted by one leader, "It's been hard to resettle the Syrian refugees due to their expectations around accepting housing [and] financial support…" Another leader remarked, "The United States' commitment to bring in 10,000 Syrians was not accompanied by an increase in funding or capacity." The second major theme, "repairing the resettlement system," is an extension of the first theme. It also includes another sub-theme, "frustration with resettlement." As one leader stated, "Families have high expectations of agency support that does not match reality." Another leader remarked that, "The entire [United States resettlement program needs a major overhaul and re-think." The third major theme is, "a non-problematic resettlement process." This theme includes several sub-themes that range from "not received any," "routine," and "ongoing," to "fine," "well," and "okay." A leader remarked, "So far, no problems reported from any of the service sectors with whom we collaborate." Similarly, another leader stated that, "It has been going well." And the fourth major theme is "revising orientation." This theme suggests that refugees' inconsistent resettlement expectations are, at least in-part, due to ineffective an orientation (i.e., pre- and post-resettlement). As noted by one leader, "Extended cultural orientation is needed." Another leader stated, "Overseas orientation needs to be broadened [so] they exactly understand what can be realistic expectations in [the] United States…" The first minor theme is "compassionate resettlement initiatives." A leader remarked, "The Syrians we have resettled have been very gracious and patient with our resettlement efforts…" Similarly, another leader stated, "It has been a pleasure serving Syrians as they are truly grateful for our assistance…" And the second minor theme, "inaccurate media portrayals," is an extension of the first theme. The leader who remarked pleasure in serving Syrians also noted, "…they are nothing like how the negative media has portrayed them." Another leader stated, "Despite much media frenzy, very few Syrians were resettled."

Appendix H

IRB Code #1610P9521
Version Date: November 05, 2016

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Twin Cities Campus

Family Social Science
College of Education
and Human Development

290 McNeal Hall
1985 Buford Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55108-6140

Main: 612-625-1900
Fax: 612-625-4227

In-Depth Qualitative Interviews with Individuals from Syria Currently Navigating Asylum in the United States

Consent Form

You are invited to participate in a research study on the experience of navigating asylum in the United States. You were selected because you arrived from Syria in the past three years and were resettled to the United States. The information we learn from you will help us understand how refugees from Syria experience resettlement. We ask that you read this form carefully and ask any questions before agreeing to be in this study.

This study is being conducted by Damir S. Utržan, M.S., LMFT and Elizabeth A. Wieling, Ph.D., LMFT from the Department of Family Social Science at the University of Minnesota. Mr. Utržan's desire to better understand refugee resettlement comes from being a refugee himself and encountering challenges navigating the asylum process. Dr. Wieling has worked with refugee families from all over the world, including Burma, Mexico, and Uganda.

Background Information

The purpose of this study is to understand how people who fled from Syria experience resettlement, such as asylum, to the U.S. Specifically, we are interested in how resettlement impacts individuals and their relationships.

Procedure

If you agree to participate, this study should take between 60- and 90-minutes in English or 90- and 120-minutes with assistance from an Arabic interpreter. You will first be asked about your psychological wellbeing. A sample question is, "In the past month, have you been unable to concentrate, remember things, or make decisions (e.g., drifting in and out of conversations, losing track of a story, forgetting what you read)?" You will then be interviewed, at a mutually agreed-upon and private location, about your resettlement experience. The interview will focus on three stages of displacement. These are pre-, during, and post-displacement. A sample pre-displacement question is, "What was life like in Syria?" A sample during displacement question is, "What were your expectations about coming to the United States? And a sample post-displacement question is, "Is there any information you wish you had before coming to the United States?" After the interview is transcript, Mr. Utržan will call you to make sure that your anonymous responses were captured accurately.

Risks and Benefits of the Study

Although minimal, this proposed study includes a number of risks. You may become uncomfortable and/or emotional discussing your experiences. You may also become increasingly aware of your minority status (i.e., ethnic, legal, socioeconomic, etc.) because of an increasingly unstable sociopolitical climate and Islamophobia in the United States. Given these risks, you have the right to discontinue the interview at any time without penalty. Although there are not direct benefits of participating in the interview, the information we learn will help us understand the experience of refugees from the largest displacement since the Second World War.

Compensation
You will receive a $25 Wal-Mart gift card for participating in this study regardless of whether or not you choose to end the interview early.

Confidentiality
The records of this study will be stored securely and encrypted according to current University of Minnesota security policies. They will be kept private and only accessible to the research team, Mr. Utržan and Dr. Wieling. Audio recordings from the interview will be deleted after they are transcribed. Documents will be securely destroyed after they are electronically uploaded to a password encrypted device. All data will be securely destroyed after completion of this study, in approximately one year.

Mandated Reporting
It is possible that your answers during the interview require us, Mr. Utržan and Dr. Wieling, to break confidentiality. Under Minnesota Law, the research team cannot keep incidents of child neglect or abuse confidential. This includes physical, sexual, and emotional neglect. An example of neglect is you described beating your child or hitting them repeatedly as hard as possible. If you disclose information about such an incident, Mr. Utržan and Dr. Wieling may be required to report it to the appropriate authorities. The research team is also required to report incidents, and thus break confidentiality, of hurting yourself or someone else.

Voluntary Nature of Participation
Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University of Minnesota. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contact and Questions
If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, you are **encouraged to contact** Mr. Utržan at (612) 217-4070 or Dr. Wieling at (612) 625-8106. If you would like to talk to someone other than the research team, **you are encouraged** to contact the University of Minnesota Research Subjects' Advocate Line at (612) 625-1650. Their address is D528 Mayo, 420 Delaware Street Southeast, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455.

You will be given a copy of this information for your records.

Statement of Consent
I have read the information above. I have asked questions and received answers. I consent to participate in this study.

Participant Name_____

Participant Signature_____ Date_____

Researcher Name_____

Researcher Signature_____ Date_____

Appendix I

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Version Date: November 13, 2016

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Twin Cities Campus

Family Social Science
College of Education
and Human Development

290 McNeal Hall
1985 Buford Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55108-6140

Main: 612-625-1900
Fax: 612-625-4227

استمارة موافقة
اللاجؤون السوريون الجدد و تجربتهم في طلب اللجوء بالولايات المتحدة

انت مدعو للمشاركة في بحث دراسي حول تجربتک في طلب اللجوء بالولايات المتحدة.لقد تم اختيارک لانک اتيت من سوريا كلاجئ خلال الثلاث سنوات الماضية وانه تم اعادة توطينک بالولايات المتحدة. هذه المعلومات ستساعدنا على فهم تجربة اللاجءين السوريين في اعادة التوطين. نرجو قراءة هذه الاستمارة بامعان و طرح اي سؤال قبل الموافقة على المشاركة في هذا البحث.

ستجرى هذه الدراسة من قبل كل من السيد دمير س. اترزان و الدكتورة اليزبث أ. وايلنغ من قسم الاجتماع الاسري بجامعة منيسوتا. ان رغبة السيد اترزان في فهم اعادة توطين اللاجءين بشكل احسن تاتي من كونه لاجءا بدوره وبانه واجه تحديات في سير عملية اللجوء. اشتغلت الدكتورة وايلنغ بدورها مع عواءل اللاجءين من شتى انحاء العالم من ضمنها بورما ،المكسيک و اوغندا

معلومات اساسية
تهدف هذه الدراسة الى فهم تجربة اعادة توطين السوريين بعدما هاجرو من سوريا لطلب اللجوء بالولايات المتحدة و بشكل خاص نحن معنيون بتأثير اعادة التوطين على الافراد و علاقاتهم

الاجراء
إذا وافقت على المشاركة، فالمقابلة ستدوم ما بين 60-الى 90 دقيقة بالانجليزية او ما بين 90- الى 120- دقيقة بمساعدة مترجم عربي. ستسأل اولا عن اعراض القلق و الاكتآب الذي يعاني منه احيانا الاشخاص بعد اعادة توطينهم.وكمثال على سؤال القلق:"هل شعرت بالخوف المفاجئ بدون سبب؟" وكمثال على سؤال الاكتآب: " هل شعرت بطاقة اقل و بطئ؟". بعد ذلک ستتم المقابلة معک في مكان خاص و متفق عليه للحديث عن تجربتک حول اعادة التوطين. المقابلة ستركز على ثلاث مراحل من التشريد وهي قبل واثناء و بعد التشريد.مثال على سؤال ما قبل التشريد هو:"كيف كانت حياتک بسوريا؟" مثال على سؤال اثناء التشريد:" ما هي توقعاتک عند مجيءک للولايات المتحدة؟" مثال على سؤال ما بعد التشريد هو:"هل هناک اي معلومات تمنيت لو عرفتها قبل قدومک الى الولايات المتحدة؟"

مصاعب و فواءد المشاركة
رغم قلة صعوبتها، فإن هذا البحث المقترح يتضمن بعض الصعوبات. يمكن ان تصبح غير مرتاح و اومنفعلا عندما نتحدث عن تجاربک. يمكن كذلک ان تشعر بشكل متزايد بوضعک كاقلية (مثلا عرقيا، قانونيا، سوسيواقتصاديا، الخ.) و ذلک نتيجة لعدم الاستقرار المتزايد بالمحيط السوسيوسياسي و الاسلامفوبيا بالولايات المتحدة. بناء على هذه الصعوبات، فإنه يحق لک انهاء هذه المقابلة في اي وقت تشاء دون عقوبة.و على الرغم من عدم وجود منافع مباشرة، فإن المعلومات التي سنتعلمها ستساعدنا على فهم تجربة اللاجءين بخصوص هذا التشرد الاوسع منذ الحرب العالمية الثانية.

التعويض
ستحصل على بطاقة وال مارت قدرها $25 للمشاركة في هذا البحث سواء اخترت انهاء المقابلة ام لا.

الخصوصية
سيتم تخزين و تشفير سجلات هذه المقابلة طبقا ل السياسة الامنية الحالية لجامعة منيسوتا.و سيتم الحفاض عليها في مكان خاص يستطيع فقط فريق البحث الدراسي السيد اترزان و الدكتورة وايلغ الدخول اليه.التسجيلات الصوتية سيتم حذفها بعد تدوينها. الوثاءق سيتم اتلافها بشكل آمن بعد تحميلها الكترونيا بجهاز مشفريحتوي على كلمة السر،كل البيانات سيتم اتلافها بشكل آمن بعدإنهاء البحث خلال سنة تقريبا.

التبليغ الاجباري
يمكن اثناء الاجوبة بالمقابلة ان يتطلب الامر من السيد اترزان و الدكتورة وايلنغ كسر السرية إذ انه طبقا لقانون منيسوتا ، فإن فريق البحث لا يستطيع الحفاظ على كتمان وقاءع تهم اهمال الطفل او الاعتداء عليه و يتضمن هذا، الاهمال الجسدي و النفسي و الجنسي. و كمثال على الاهمال اذا وصفت ضرب طفلك او ضربه ضربا مبرحا بشكل متكرر. اذا ادليت بمعلومات عن هذه الواقعة فإن السيد اترزان و الدكتورة وايلنغ سيبلغان عن الواقعة ل السلطات المعنية. يطلب كذلك من فريق البحث التبليغ عن هذه الوقاءع ومن تم يتم كسر السرية في حالة التفكير في ايذاء نفسك او ايذاء شخص آخر.

طبيعة التطوع بالمشاركة
المشاركة في هذا البحث تطوعية.فقرارك بالمشاركة او عدم المشاركة لن يؤثر في علاقتك مع جامعة منيسوتا سواء بالوقت الحاضر او بالمستقبل. اذا قررت المشاركة، فأنت حر في عدم الجواب عن اي سؤال كما ويمكنك الانسحاب دون ان يؤثر ذلك على تلك العلاقات.

ل الاتصال او الاسءلة
اذا كانت لديك اية اسءلة او انشغالات فنحن نشجعك على الاتصال بالباحث الرءيسي السيد اترزان على الرقم التالي:
مشرفة الكلية الدكتورة وايلنغ على الرقم :(612) 217-4070
اذا اردت التحدث الى شخص آخر غير فريق البحث فإننا نشجعك على الاتصال بجامعة منيسوتا قسم المرافعة للدراسات و الابحاث على الخط :(612) 625-8106

بيان الموافقة
إنني قرأت المعلومات اعلاه و حصلت على الاجوبة على اسءلتي. اوافق على المشاركة في هذا البحث.
.

اسم المشارك_____

امضاء المشارك _____التاريخ_____

اسم الباحث_____

امضاء الباحث_____ التاريخ_____

Appendix J

IRB Code #1610P9521
Version Date: November 05, 2016

Brief Refugee Mental Health Screener
Clinician/Assessor Administered

Name: _____ Current Date: _____

Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female Migration Date: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Arrival Date: _____

Sometimes refugees/asylum-seekers have emotional difficulties or pain because of resettlement. I want to ask you about some of these emotions, thoughts, and feelings. Please listen as I read each one aloud and carefully decide how much each bothered you in the past month.

The following pictures may be used as an example of the item responses: (0) "never"; (1) "rarely"; (2) "sometimes"; and (3) "often". It is a series of glasses filled with water. The glasses representing greater frequency have more water in them.

"0" Never ***"1" Rarely*** ***"2" Sometimes*** ***"3" Often***

Statement	0	1	2	3
In the past month, have you been unable to concentrate, remember things, or make decisions (e.g., drifting in and out of conversations, losing track of a story, forgetting what you read)?	☐	☐	☐	☐
In the past month, have you felt worthless?	☐	☐	☐	☐
In the past month, have you had a fear of losing control?	☐	☐	☐	☐
In the past month, have you experienced problems because of what happened in the past that kept you from being involved with your family or socializing with your friends?	☐	☐	☐	☐
How much are you unable to do the things that you need to do on a daily basis (e.g., cooking, bathing, taking care of children, going to appointments)?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Total Score	___	___	___	___

Brief Refugee Mental Health Screening

Scoring/Interpretation

This brief mental health screening measure was developed to determine whether refugees experience moderate to severe impairment in their functioning. Endorsement of three or more statements at "sometimes" or "often" indicates moderate to severe symptoms, and thus, clinical impairment.

Clinical Cutoff Met/Exceeded

☐ Yes ☐ No

Appendix K

IRB Code #1610P9521 1
Version Date: November 09, 2016

In-Depth Qualitative Interviews with Individuals from Syria Currently Navigating Asylum in the United States

Demographic Information

Name: _____ Current Date: _____

Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female Migration Date: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Arrival Date: _____

Immigration/Legal Status: ☐ Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR) ☐ Conditional Permanent Resident
☐ Refugee/Asylum-Seeker ☐ Temporary Protected Status (TPS)
☐ Other: _____

Marital Status: ☐ Single ☐ Married ☐ Divorced ☐ Separated ☐ Windowed ☐ Other: _____

Education: ☐ Grammar School ☐ High School or Equivalent ☐ Vocational or Technical School
☐ Some College ☐ Bachelor's Degree or Equivalent ☐ Master's Degree or Equivalent
☐ Doctoral Degree or Equivalent ☐ Professional Degree or Equivalent

Employment Status: ☐ Unemployed ☐ Part-Time or Hourly (< 15 Hours) ☐ Part-Time (15 – 34 Hours)
☐ Full-Time (40 Hours) ☐ Temporary ☐ Other: _____

English Skills: ☐ Proficient ☐ Intermediate ☐ Basic ☐ Below Basic ☐ None

Housing Status: ☐ Homeless ☐ Homeless Shelter/Transitional Housing ☐ Friends or Family
☐ Rent ☐ Own

Social Support:

Do you spend time with people who share your culture, ethnic group, language, or religion? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you access information about your culture, ethnic group, language, or religion? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Have you attended a celebration or event of your culture, ethnic group, language, or religion? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Interview Protocol

Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me today. My name is Damir Utržan and I would like to learn more about your experiences navigating asylum in the United States. Specifically, I am interested in how you experienced the migration (i.e., resettlement) process. This interview should take anywhere between 60- and 90-minutes in English or 90- to 120-minutes with assistance from an Arabic interpreter. I will be audio recording the interview because I do not want to miss any of your comments. Although I will be taking some notes during our conversation, I will not be able to write down everything. Because the interview will be audio recorded, please make sure to speak loudly so I do not miss your comments. All responses will be kept confidential. This means that only the research team, consisting of myself and my supervisor Dr. Wieling, will have access to the interview. I will make sure that any information reported in the future does not include identifying information. Remember, you are not required to talk about anything you do not feel comfortable with. You may also end the interview at any time, or request to take breaks, without penalty.

Do you have any questions before we start?

Questions

Grand Tour Question 1

I would like to begin by asking you to share a little about what your life was like in Syria, or another country, before coming to the U.S. What can you tell me about your life before?

Follow-Up Questions

Pre-Displacement

A. What was your life like in Syria?
B. What did you know about the U.S.?
C. How did you come?
D. Who made the decision to come?
E. How long did it take to make the decision [to come]?
F. Why did you choose the U.S.?
G. How did your family feel about coming to the U.S.?

Grand Tour Question 2:

Now, I would like to know more about your journey to the U.S. How would you describe your journey?

Follow-Up Questions

Displacement

A. How was everyone's health and wellbeing during migration?
B. What were your expectations about coming?
    - Where did you get this information?
    - Was it easy or difficult to find this information?
    - Did the information you had influence your decision to come?
C. What were you thinking when you first came?
D. How were your family relationships?

Grand Tour Question 3

How would you describe life for you and your family since coming to the U.S.?

Follow-Up Questions

Post-Displacement

A. How did the immigration/government authorities treat you?
B. Is there any information you wish you had before coming?
C. Where did you arrive?
D. What has it been like navigating asylum in the U.S.?
E. What financial resources did you have after arriving?
F. How have your feelings about the U.S. change since first coming?
G. What has been the happiest/saddest moments in your life since coming?
H. What are your dreams and hopes about the future?
I. How do you believe resettling to the U.S. has affected your own sense of self, health, and overall wellbeing?
J. How has coming here affected your family relationships – as a partner, father/mother, son/daughter, etc.?
K. Is there anything else that you would like me to know about your experiences resettling to the U.S.?

Again, thank you for taking the time to meet with me today. This information will help social scientists, healthcare providers, and legislators better understand what it is like for Syrian refugees to navigate asylum in the U.S.

Appendix L

Participant: Maan Ganim

Possible Quote	Raw Data	Keywords	Concepts	Detailed Reading	Selective Reading	Holistic Reading	Initial Codes
	[We had] a normal life, just working. It was life, we were working, and I was together with my family. We were in Aleppo. Yeah.	Normal Life Working Together Family Aleppo	Stability Intimate Familial Relationships	Aleppo was the largest city in Syria before the war. Protests against the al-Assad regime were held in Aleppo led to security forces killing two attendees (Ali, 2012).	Ordinary Life	Life Before the War	Past Family
	When I was like 15, I got it [a barbershop] from the parents, and started working. Um…then I got married. Yeah, barbershop. I was working in a barbershop from then on. Yeah.	15 [Years-Old] Barbershop Parents Working Married	Professional Trade Work Ethic Family Life	Inherited a barbershop from his parents at a young age, began working, and subsequently married his current wife.	Career Family	Focus on Family	Family
	[I have been with my wife for] um…around 14 years [and we have] six kids, [all of whom are in the U.S. with us]. [Their ages are]…um…okay, 18, 17, and going down.	Wife 14 Years Six Kids U.S. With Us 18 [Years-Old] 17 [Years-Old] Going Down	Large Family Unified Resettlement	Had first child at a relatively young age.	Large Family Intimate Relationships	Focus on Family	Family
✓	We were, like, feeling fear [before we came to the United States]. We were…move- moving to Jordan. That was, uh…[our] life in Jordan; stable but not that much [stable]. Then we tried to [make] contact with some people who, uh…traveled [to the United States] before us. They were explaining to us, "It's a good life." Yeah. They, uh…uh…recommended us to come [to the United States] and, "You'll feel very good."	Were Feeling Fear Moving Jordan Life Stable Not Much Tried Contact People United States Explaining Good Life Recommended Come Feel Good	Displacement Fear Unstable Resettlement Opportunities	Participant and his family were afraid, because of the increasing violence in Syria, before coming to the United States. He took his family 472 miles south to Jordan after being urged by parents and friends.	Fear Opportunities	Fear of the Future	Psychological Impact Ambiguity Hope
	Uh…I will get, not get any advantages in Jordan. And later they [people who traveled to the United States before us] told us, uh…"It's not safe. You have to leave."	Not Get Advantages Jordan Not Safe Leave	Insecure Displacement	Life in Jordan was difficult because it was unsafe and Syrians were subjected to discrimination and prejudice.	Instability and Insecurity Discrimination and Prejudice	Loss of Safety	Psychological Impact Danger and Oppression
✓	We had pressure, um…um…in Jordan, um…specifically on Syrian guys.	Pressure Jordan Syrian	Discrimination and Prejudice	Syrian refugees were routinely stopped by the police and questioned.	Persecution	Oppression	Danger and Oppression
✓	Though, they [Syrian guys] were not able to work or get the ID.	Syrian Not Able Work	Discrimination and Prejudice	Syrians, particularly men, were unable to work in Jordan. And those who were employed worked under difficult conditions.	Discrimination and Prejudice	Oppression	Ambiguity Danger and Oppression
	Then we decided to come to…here [the United States].	Decided Come United States	Resettlement	Became increasingly frustrated with his family's treatment in Jordan. He consulted with friends in the United States on how they applied for asylum and left.	Frustration Discrimination and Prejudice	Frustration	Hope
	Uh…I couldn't work. I still had, uh…family back [in Syria], uh…who didn't have income to be alive.	Couldn't Work Family Syria Didn't Have Income Be Alive	Unemployment Familial Separation No Resources	Used to working from a young age but was unemployed in Jordan; he was unable to provide for his immediate family (i.e., wife and children) or parents.	Survival Instability	Focus on Survival	Ambiguity Psychological Impact Danger and Oppression
	We sacrificed work. Then we, uh…got arrested from the government. The second day I went to go by someone and ask [about being released]. "Okay, you can release them…they paid your money." A few…there was a warning about that. "If you, uh…work again we will, uh…like tell you to go back home…to Syria."	Sacrificed Work Arrested Government [Jordanian] Released Okay Paid Money Warning Work Again Go Back Syria	Discrimination and Prejudice Government Persecution Forced Return	Described being arrested by the police for working without authorization and threatened to be sent back to Syria. As such, his wife and older children worked without authorization to support the family.	Persecution Fear	Oppression	Ambiguity Danger and Oppression Psychological Impact

	…it comes from the people, in general. Yeah because, "If you are from Syria, you are not welcome here [in Jordan] to work." Uh…it's kind of like, uh…verbal abuse. "All the Syrians got everything from us; we don't have jobs," is the statement of Jordan[ian] people.	People Not Welcome [in Jordan] Work Verbal Abuse Syrians Got Everything Don't Have Jobs	Hostile Environment Discrimination and Prejudice Perceived Resource Drain	Poverty in Jordan and Turkey, both countries with a large number of Syrian refugees, make discrimination and prejudice common.	Poverty Insecurity	Focus on Survival	**Danger and Oppression** **Ambiguity**
	So, I said, "Okay, it's better to go back [to Syria] than stay here [in Jordan]." Yeah, then we traveled to the United States.	Okay Better Go Back Traveled United States	Limited Options Sudden Resettlement	Being unable to work, along with his wife and children being subjected to prejudice and discrimination, participant decided to return to Syria. But then he was presented with an opportunity to apply for asylum to a third country, the United States.	Instability Survival	Focus on Survival	**Ambiguity** **Hope**
	[It all happened] so fast, [it just took] four months…all of it.	Happened So Fast Four Months	Sudden Resettlement	Opportunity to apply for asylum occurred quickly. The family did not have much time to discuss other options.	Resettlement Hope	Hope for the Future	**Hope**
	The United Nations [UN] asked us to, uh…if, "You are interested to go [to the United States]?" and we got an acceptance. We would like to leave Jordan. They came [to us].	United Nations Asked Go [to United States] Acceptance Leave Jordan	Resettlement Opportunity Unified Resettlement	Participant alone, without the presence of his wife or children, accepted the invitation to apply for asylum to the United States.	Life-Changing Decision	Hope for the Future	**Hope**
	Yeah, all of us. We, uh…like made kind of a meeting and we decided to go [to the United States].	All [Family] Meeting Decided	Familial Decision	Decision to apply for asylum to the United States was made by the family.	Collective Resettlement Decision	Focus on Family	**Family**
	Uh…the life, the life in Syria, it stopped.	Life Syria Stopped	No Life	Participant began to experience ambiguity in various parts of his life after the crises in Syria errupted. Like other reufgees, he was forced to abandon everything he worked for and was familiar with.	Insecurity and Instability Abandonment of Life	Fear of the Future	**Past**
✓	We got, like, uh…rented a house [in Jordan] for a year because we promised ourselves, "The next month we'll go back to Syria, but…until we gave, gave up hope that, uh…[there is] no way to go back home [to Syria]."	Rented House [in Jordan] Year Promised Go Back [to Syria] Gave Up Hope No Way Go Back Home	Hope of Returning Loss of Hope	Participant and his family rented a house in Jordan for nearly 2.5 years. They always wanted to return to Syria but eventually gave up hope after discussing the situation with friends and family. They agreed that there was nothing to return for/to.	Ambiguity Hope	Ambiguity	**Ambiguity** **Danger and Oppression**
✓	Then we decided [to come to the United States].	Decided Come [United States]	Resettlement	Participants decision to apply for asylum to the United States was based on loosing everything in Syria.	Resettlement	Ambiguity	**Hope** **Ambiguity**
	We were not feeling comfortable in Jordan. Then we asked the UN if that's possible to go anywhere else. They [the UN] said, "No…" In two years they [the UN] offered, uh…an application…to give us the option to go anywhere.	Not Comfortable [in Jordan] Asked UN Possible Anywhere Else No Two-Years Offered Application Go Anywhere	Discomfort Instability Ambiguity	Two years passed from when the participant was offered to apply for asylum to actually coming to the United States.	Ambiguity Hope	Hope for the Future	**Psychological Impact** **Ambiguity**
	One of them [options] was the United States. I got, uh…I got the fast acceptance…when I got that call.	One [Option] United States Fast Acceptance Call	Quick Processing	Offer to apply was sudden, the wait for the actual application was slow, but their claim processing was quick.	Resettlement	Hope for the Future	**Hope**
	When I went back to…went back to my house, I explained to my wife and my kids. They said, "Okay, we will go [to the United States]." We took that decision then, at that time.	Went Back My House Explained Wife Kids Okay Decision	Familial Decision	Family finalized their decision to seek asylum in the United States together after the participant explained the situation to them.	Collective Resettlement Decision	Focus on Family	**Family**
	[It happened really, really quick]. Yes, the fastest decision because [there were] no more options. Just the United States.	Happened Really Quick Fastes Decision No Options Just United States	Quick Decision Lack of Options	Participant had no other options for asylum, either he took his family to the United States or they returned to Syria. The latter, however, was unsafe. They were unable to stay in Jordan because the environment was hostile.	No Options Survival Fear	Focus on Survival	**Hope** **Ambiguity**

	We were having trouble with our neighbors that, uh…enjoyment with our kids – to leave this problem [in Jordan] with the neighbors. And when, uh…like…my son was age 12…when he go and used the stairs – downstairs or upstairs – all the neighbors [would say], "The Syrian guy is coming. The Syrian guy…"	Trouble Neighbors [in Jordan] Kids Leave Problem Son Age 12 Used Stairs Neighbors Say Syrian Guy	Discrimination and Prejudice Bullying	Participant's children were also subjected to bullying; their neighbors in Jordan would refer to his son as "that Syrian" whenever he did anythign disturbing (e.g., playing in their appartment).	Discrimination and Prejudice Bullying	Oppression	**Psychological Impact** **Ambiguity** **Danger and Oppression**
	This made it some[what] stressful for me. It made us, like, uh…anxious [a] little bit.	Stressful Anxious	Psychological Effects	Participant and his wife beccame anxious over their children's safety after the bullying began.	Anxiety Fear	Psychological Impact	**Psychological Impact**
✓	It was not secure in Jordan. We, we…the kids, they didn't go to school, uh…they didn't go to school. But she was so, so happy…about, uh…when they [the family] would move to the United States; all the kids would go back to school.	Not Secure [in Jordan] Kids Didn't Go to School So Happy Moved to United States Go back to School	Insecure Unstable Isolated	Children did not attend school in Jordan because they were not given identification documents. Their desire to come to the United States was based, at least in-part, on their children attending school again.	Social Isolation Insecurity	Instability	**Danger and Oppression** **Ambiguity** **Hope**
✓	Uh…she was so happy because there were like accidents that happened…accidents happened that time, they accused her [his wife], uh…she threw rocks at a store. It's so far away, it's not like, uh…nobody can like, uh…be targeted by a gun…	So Happy Accidents Happened Accused [Wife] Threw Rocks Store Far Away Nobody	Discrimination and Prejudice	Wife was happy and grateful for being granted admission to the United States because both experienced harassment.	Gratitude	Hope for the Future	**Hope** **Danger and Oppression**
✓	…but [Jordanians] said that she did that. And, uh…that happened [when] she had someone [with her] – a baby or something – and they complained [about] her…to the police officer or something, which made a lot of trouble.	Happened Someone Baby Complained Police Trouble	Discrimination and Prejudice	Participant spoke-up for his wife even though he knew, and was afraid, of the potential consequences. There was an increase in violence against Syrian refugees during the participant's last weeks in Jordan.	Self-Advocacy	Focus on Survival Focus on Family	**Psychological Impact** **Danger and Oppression**
	I went to the officers and said…"I will give you 100 rocks. If you target that place and hit someone specific, I will be at the jail." It would be like, uh…far away from me…or get away from me.	Went Office Said Give Rocks Target Place Hit Someone Jail Far Away	Pre-Resettlement Challenges	Inccidents such as these were common in Jordan because security forces, such as the police, did not protect Syrian refugees.	Persecution Discrimination and Prejudice	Oppression	**Self-Advocacy and Justice** **Danger and Oppression**
	A lot of stories. We have a lot of stories.	A Lot Stories	Pervasive Discrimination and Prejudice	Confirmed that they experienced a lot of prejudice and discrimination despite only describing one inccident.	Discrimination and Prejudice	Oppression	**Past** **Danger and Oppression**
	[We lived in Jordan for] two years and a half [years]. Yeah. [Then] we go to the Italy. Then Miami and Florida. Then San Antonio. It was very, very comfortable.	[Lived] [Jordan] 2.5 Years Italy Miami [Florida] San Antonio [Texas]	Ambiguity Resettlement Journey	Resettlement process itself was relatively comfortable. They traveled from Jordan to Italy and then the United States.	Resettlement	Hope for the Future	**Ambiguity** **Hope**
	All the kids, [it was] the first time they traveled by airplane. And they, it was like a good experience for them. And they were so happy about that.	Kids First Time Airplane Good Experience So Happy	Resettlement Anxiety Positive Experience	Participants' children were happy about coming to the United States; they have not been in school for nearly three years at that point.	Anxiety Fear	Psychological Impact	**Hope**
	I couldn't like describe that [first] day [in the United States].	Couldn't Describe [First Day] [United States]	Culture Shock	Unable to describe his first day in the United States may, at least in-part, due to "culture shock."	Post-Resettlement/Adjustment	Hope for the Future	**Psychological Impact**
	And on the other hand, there's many people, they are good [compared to others who were bad in Jordan]. But, uh…I have like [a] bad experience with many [people] there [in Jordan]; I just remember that, that stuff.	Other Hand Many People Good Bad Experiences With Many [in Jordan] Remember	Negative Pre-Resettlement Experiences	Participant continued to have intrusive memories of Jordan after he arrived to the United States.	Anxiety	Psychological Impact	**Hope** **Past** **Psychological Impact**
	We still, like, uh…miss many people there [in Jordan]. And we still communicate with them, until now.	Miss People [in Jordan] Communiacte Now	Forced Separation	He made friends in Jordan, and had some good memories, he had considerably more bad memories. Participant is still in contact with friends in Jordan.	Social Isolation Second Loss	Fear of the Future	**Psychological Impact** **Past**

	All the…my family are in Syria. I was living in the main city, in Jabal [Jabal Sem'an], in Aleppo. But my origin, [is] from the, the Ayn al-Arab [region].	Family Syria Jabal Aleppo Origin Ayn al-Arab	Home	Although not in Aleppo, participant's family is still in Syria; they live in Jabal al-Druze, a small city 400 miles south of Aleppo and 222 miles south of the Jordanian border. Although relatively isolated from the conflict, there have been more inccidents recently.	Familial Separation Insecurity and Instability Fear	Fear of the Future Focus on Family	**Family** **Psychological Impact** **Past**
	All of them, they are…they were fine.	All Were Fine	Immediate Family Concern	Parents and extended family in Syria are find because they keep to themselves.	Social Isolation	Fear of the Future Focus on Family	**Family** **Psychological Impact**
	Uh…three daughters, they…um…refused to go to the school in Jordan. I didn't know what was, the specific reasons.	Daughters Refused School [in Jordan] Didn't Know Reasons	Isolation Fear	Even when given an opportunity to attend a Syrian school in Jordan, the participant's oldest children; three daughters, refused. Participant believes that they were also bullied but did not want to disclose specific details as to protect their parents.	Discrimination and Prejudice Bullying	Oppression	**Danger and Oppression**
	Harassment there, maybe. Yeah, uh…I promised them, uh…when, when, uh… "When we go to the United States, you'll go back to school." And that was like so happy for them.	Harassment Maybe Promised Go United States School So Happy	Discrimination and Prejudice Bullying Hope for Change	His children were happy about being able to attend school in the United States.	Hope Resuming Education	Hope for the Future	**Danger and Oppression** **Hope**
	It was the best time [coming to the United States] for them [my daughters].	Best Time Coming Daughters	Hope for Change	Participants' three daughters, who are all around 18-years-old, were the happiest about coming to the United States. This may be because they are old enough to understand the situation in Syria and Jordan.	Hope Resuming Education	Hope for the Future	**Hope** **Family**
	Uh…I was thinking all the people [are] equal [in the United States].	Thinking People Equal	Equality	Participant viewed the United States as a place where everyone, irrespective of background, had equal rights. This is consistent with the impression other Syrian refugees reported. It also illustrates how they did not have equal rights, compared to citizens, in Jordan.	Impression of United States	Freedom and Opportunity	**Hope** **Self-Advocacy and Justice**
	Nobody, uh…like, gets more than others. When I, uh…arrived to the United States I got the ID. Uh…I was, I was feeling comfortable if I went anywhere, I will like show them the ID.	Nobody Gets More Arrived Got ID Feeling Comfortable Show ID	Equality Post-Resettlement Comfort Safety and Stability Sense of Identity	Comfort increased upon arrival when the participant was issued an identification. This may be nothing more than symoblic but illustrates the return of safety and stabiltiy, neither of which he had in Jordan.	Belonging Regaining Safety and Stability Resuming Life	Hope for the Future	**Self-Advocacy and Justice** **Hope** **Psychological Impact**
	Even in Jordan I was not able to drive any cars. We don't have any rights or advantages in Jordan but, just here [in the United States]; feeling, uh…good. It's very good.	Jordan Not Able Drive Don't Have Rights Advantages [United States] Feeling Good	Discrimination and Prejudice	Described not even being able to drive cars in Jordan, which he did illegally as a result thereof. Even small things that others take for granted are symbols of freedom.	Regaining Safety and Stability Resuming Life	Hope for the Future	**Danger and Oppression** **Self-Advocacy and Justice**
	Yeah, we had problems and, even in Syria, it's still trouble there. But if you move to the, uh…other country and you get the ID…in five years you will get the, uh…citizenship, you will start your life.	Problems Syria Trouble Move Other Country Get ID Five Years Citizenship	Hope for Change Sense of Identity	The situation in Syria has not gotten much better than what he experienced in Jordan. But in the United States he has an opportunity to regain safety, stability, and his life.	Regaining Safety and Stability Resuming Life	Hope for the Future	**Past** **Danger and Oppression** **Hope**

All the…my family are in Syria. I was living in the main city, in Jabal [Jabal Sem'an], in Aleppo. But my origin, [is] from the, the Ayn al-Arab [region].	Family Syria Jabal Aleppo Origin Ayn al-Arab	Home	Although not in Aleppo, participant's family is still in Syria; they live in Jabal al-Druze, a small city 400 miles south of Aleppo and 222 miles south of the Jordanian border. Although relatively isolated from the conflict, there have been more inccidents recently.	Familial Separation Insecurity and Instability Fear	Fear of the Future Focus on Family	**Family** **Psychological Impact** **Past**
All of them, they are…they were fine.	All Were Fine	Immediate Family Concern	Parents and extended family in Syria are find because they keep to themselves.	Social Isolation	Fear of the Future Focus on Family	**Family** **Psychological Impact**
Uh…three daughters, they…um…refused to go to the school in Jordan. I didn't know what was, the specific reasons.	Daughters Refused School [in Jordan] Didn't Know Reasons	Isolation Fear	Even when given an opportunity to attend a Syrian school in Jordan, the participant's oldest children; three daughters, refused. Participant believes that they were also bullied but did not want to disclose specific details as to protect their parents.	Discrimination and Prejudice Bullying	Oppression	**Danger and Oppression**
Harassment there, maybe. Yeah, uh…I promised them, uh…when, when, uh… "When we go to the United States, you'll go back to school." And that was like so happy for them.	Harassment Maybe Promised Go United States School So Happy	Discrimination and Prejudice Bullying Hope for Change	His children were happy about being able to attend school in the United States.	Hope Resuming Education	Hope for the Future	**Danger and Oppression** **Hope**
It was the best time [coming to the United States] for them [my daughters].	Best Time Coming Daughters	Hope for Change	Participants' three daughters, who are all around 18-years-old, were the happiest about coming to the United States. This may be because they are old enough to understand the situation in Syria and Jordan.	Hope Resuming Education	Hope for the Future	**Hope** **Family**
Uh…I was thinking all the people [are] equal [in the United States].	Thinking People Equal	Equality	Participant viewed the United States as a place where everyone, irrespective of background, had equal rights. This is consistent with the impression other Syrian refugees reported. It also illustrates how they did not have equal rights, compared to citizens, in Jordan.	Impression of United States	Freedom and Opportunity	**Hope** **Self-Advocacy and Justice**
Nobody, uh…like, gets more than others. When I, uh…arrived to the United States I got the ID. Uh…I was, I was feeling comfortable if I went anywhere, I will like show them the ID.	Nobody Gets More Arrived Got ID Feeling Comfortable Show ID	Equality Post-Resettlement Comfort Safety and Stability Sense of Identity	Comfort increased upon arrival when the participant was issued an identification. This may be nothing more than symoblic but illustrates the return of safety and stabiltiy, neither of which he had in Jordan.	Belonging Regaining Safety and Stability Resuming Life	Hope for the Future	**Self-Advocacy and Justice** **Hope** **Psychological Impact**
Even in Jordan I was not able to drive any cars. We don't have any rights or advantages in Jordan but, just here [in the United States]; feeling, uh…good. It's very good.	Jordan Not Able Drive Don't Have Rights Advantages [United States] Feeling Good	Discrimination and Prejudice	Described not even being able to drive cars in Jordan, which he did illegally as a result thereof. Even small things that others take for granted are symbols of freedom.	Regaining Safety and Stability Resuming Life	Hope for the Future	**Danger and Oppression** **Self-Advocacy and Justice**
Yeah, we had problems and, even in Syria, it's still trouble there. But if you move to the, uh…other country and you get the ID…in five years you will get the, uh…citizenship, you will start your life.	Problems Syria Trouble Move Other Country Get ID Five Years Citizenship	Hope for Change Sense of Identity	The situation in Syria has not gotten much better than what he experienced in Jordan. But in the United States he has an opportunity to regain safety, stability, and his life.	Regaining Safety and Stability Resuming Life	Hope for the Future	**Past** **Danger and Oppression** **Hope**

s, uh…thinking, "I'm in my hometown…because ybody's working and they respect me and my ly." Uh…for a period of time we missed the ct from, from the people. But when we reached nited States, it's different. If…in Syria if the like rnment or the officer or, uh…who's cing…the minister, was sucking blood and rything.	Thinking Hometown Working Respect Me [Respect] My Family Missed Respect Uniterd States Different Syria Government Officer Minister Sucking Blood Everything	Loss of Identity and Respect Regaining Identtiy and Respect Syrian Government Corruption	Participant lost everything he worked for in Syria, such as his barbershop and respect from the community, which he was afraid he would never regain. Participant also expressed anger regarding government corruption, at the expensive of citizens, in Syria.	Frustration Anger Hypocracy	Psychological Impact	**Safety and Stability** **Psychological Impact** **Self-Advocacy and Justice** **Past**
[in the United States], it's so, so different than [in Syria].	United States So Different	Country Differences	Comparing the United States, and its positive attributes, to Syria and its negative attributes.	Reflecting on Differences	Hypocracy/Government Corruption	**Self-Advocacy and Justice**
olic Charities; I had like, uh…one situation with, someone in the Catholic Charities.	Catholic Charities One Situation Someone	Resettlement Challenges	Described inccident with resettlement organization relatively immediately upon arrival.	Post-Resettlement Challenges	Frustration	**Post-Resettlement Challenge**
was from [the] Arab region. They are eight here is, uh…house. Uh…that caseworker who was cing for the Catholic Charities, she got two ments for us.	From Arab Region Eight [People] House Caseworker Two Apartments	Inter-Ethnic Conflict/Disagreement	Attributes inccident to caseworkers ethnicity, which is often the case with Syrian refugees, and her lack of understanding of local ordinances laws.	Post-Resettlement Challenges	Frustration	**Post-Resettlement Challenge**
said that, "Kids will sleep in the, uh…apartment rou, uh…you and your wife will stay in other, ther apartment."	Kids Sleep One Apartment You and Wife Other Apartment	Family Separation	Anger over adults being separated, in different apartment, from children.	Anger Fear Post-Resettlement Challenges Family Separation	Focus on Family Focus on Survival	**Post-Resettlement Challenge** **Ambiguity**
aid, "All my kids, they are still young. I come to nited States to be together, not like separate." said, "This is the law here [in the United States]."	Kids Still Young Come United States Together Not Separate Law	Anger Young Children Family Separation Legal Rights	Advocated for himself and his children by emphasizing that he did not come to the United States to be separated from his children.	Self-Advocacy Post-Resettlement Challenges Anger	Freedom and Opportunity Focus on Family Focus on Survival	**Self-Advocacy and Justice** **Family** **Danger and Oppression**
d, "Impossible that law [exists] here in the United s, like this." I spoke out and I said, "I have to talk ith the, uh…boss of the, this organization. If this he law I will go back to my home [in Syria]."	Impossible Law United States Spoke Out Talk To Boss This [Law] Will Go [Home]	Anger Self-Advocacy Returning to Syria	Continued self-advocacy despite caseworker being adamant that local ordinances/law does not allow for eight people to be in one apartment; she did not, however, address variance in terms of bedrooms.	Self-Advocacy Anger	Focus on Survival Agency	**Self-Advocacy and Justice** **Ambiguity** **Post-Resettlement Challenge**
second day, the second day the, uh…chairman of organization, she said, "No, that's not the rule."	Second Day Chairman Organization No [Rule]	Vindication	Received vindication, along with apology from caseworker's supervisor, who began process to move family into three-bedroom apartment.	Challenge Resolution Family Unity	Hope for the Future	**Self-Advocacy and Justice** **Hope**
they moved them [the children] from that tment, or complex, to this complex. This is my in the United States.	Moved Children My Right United States	Family Reunification	Positive resolution of inccident confirmed perception of equal rights and law in the United States.	Challenge Resolution Impression of the U.S.	Freedom and Opportunity Agency	**Safety and Stability** **Self-Advocacy and Justice**
, uh…she [the caseworker from Catholic ities] was from Palestine…that lady…and she, she doesn't know what kind of program about the m.	Caseworker Palestine Doesn't Know System	Inter-Ethnic Conflict/Disagreement Post-Resettlement Challenges	N/A	Post-Resettlement Challenges	Hypocracy/Government Corruption	**Post-Resettlement Challenge**
I was, by myself, I am feel fear, "How can [they] e kids sleep in the other place and I am [in] this e?"	Feel Fear Kids Sleep Other Place	Family Separation Fear	Afraid of what would happen to children because they lived in a different apartment. Questioned how such a haphazard decision was made by resettlement affiliate.	Fear Post-Resettlement Challenges	Psychological Impact	**Danger and Oppression** **Psychological Impact**
, uh…the previous apartment, which we got, is – veen this apartment and the other – more than one meter. It's so far away.	Previous Apartment More 1 Kilometer [Half Mile] Far	Family Separation Fear Helplessness	N/A	Fear Post-Resettlement Challenges Family Separation	Psychological Impact	**Ambiguity**

rtment before but I couldn't like sleep. I y will not leave my apartment. If no back home [to Syria]."	Couldn't Sleep No Not Leave My Apartment No Way Go Back Home	Anxiety Family Separation Return to Syria	Unable to sleep due to anxiety and worry of what would or could happen to his children. Explained that he would rather return to Syria together than live in the United States separately.	Anxiety Intrusive Thoughts Discrimination and Prejudice	Psychological Impact	**Psychological Impact** **Ambiguity**
uh…[caseworker] from Palastine, "I am r myself. I couldn't know where I can ow any place here [in the United	Told Caseworker Palastine Feeling Fear Don't Know Any Place	Fear Social Isolation Post-Resettlement Challenges	Also afraid for himself and trying to find an apartment elsewhere in the United States without an income, social support, or ability to speak English.	Fear Social Isolation	Hypocracy/Government Corruption	**Self-Advocacy and Justice** **Psychological Impact** **Ambiguity**
ay I asked, to the, um…chairman of the- ion, she…she came by herself. She was . How she treated us, very well.	Second Day Asked Chairman Organization Perfect Treated Us Very Well	Self-Advocacy Problem Resolution Respect	Positive interaction with caseworker's supervisor.	Self-Advocacy	Freedom and Opportunity	**Self-Advocacy and Justice** **Hope**
." I said, "I came here [to the United er with our kids, not like to separate [us	Said No Came [Together] Not [Separate]	Vindication Family Reunification	Continued self-advocacy by stating importance of not being separated from his children.	Self-Advocacy	Focus on Family	**Self-Advocacy and Justice** **Family**
ot all the, uh…procedures from urities] but, uh…by the caseworker.	Procedures Caseworker	Post-Resettlement/Adjustment	Caseworker helped participant and his family complete initial resettlement paperwork for limited government assistance, social security card, etc.	Post-Resettlement/Adjustment Belonging Resuming Life	Agency	**Safety and Stability**
.vaccination. I got…I filled out many ations. We got the social, uh…security t the health insurance. I got like, ot the, uh…security, uh…social security eling very, very comfortable… because of, to be part of this, uh...[country].	Vaccination Many Forms Health Insurance Social Security Card Feeling [Very Comfortable] Part of [Country]	Post-Resettlement/Adjustment Regaining Identity and Stability	Receiving an identification and social security card, in addition to a positive interaction with the caseworker's supervisor and police officer, made participant feel welcome in the United States. These experiences are in contrast to discrimination and prejudice in Jordan.	Belonging Resuming Life	Hope for the Future	**Safety and Stability** **Hope**
been the saddest moment since coming States] except the, the uh…bad is is the saddest [moment]. Otherwise I ay bad moments]. There is like, , no more bad action [that] will happen.	Saddest Moment Since Coming Bad Apartment Saddest [Moment] Don't Have [Bad Moments] No More Bad Action	Post-Resettlement Challenges	No negative experiences in the United States aside from apartment incident which was quickly resolved. Participant is not otherwise concerned about other incidents happening. However, this was before the presidential election and inauguration.	Post-Resettlement/Adjustment	Hope for the Future	**Post-Resettlement Challenge**
first come [to the United States] and we d about that action. And I discovered law here is easy and I can work and go	First Come Surprised Discovered Law East Work Go Anywhere	Legal Rights Freedom to Travel	Incident was surprising because it did not correspond with his impression of equality in the United States. But he learned that resolving problems was easy, which also affirmed his initially impression.	Impression of the United States Hypocracy	Freedom and Opportunity	**Hope** **Self-Advocacy and Justice**
rker told me, "If you have any trouble or ust call 911. They will come just say, 'Help me'."	Social Worker Trouble Call 911 Just Say Help Me	Post-Resettlement/Adjustment Regaining Safety	Caseworker explained how emergency services work in the United States and that participant could call the police anytime for help.	Post-Resettlement/Adjustment	Post-Resettlement Challenges/Adjustment	**Safety and Stability**
n, uh…the Jordan, the important thing thing's been good, like, except spending ng care about my kids.	Jordan Important Kids Nothing [Good] Except [Kids]	Limited Pre-Resettlement Positivity	Aside from his children being safe, participant did not report any other concerns or problems. His primary focus is on taking care of his children.	Post-Resettlement/Adjustment Resuming Life	Focus on Family Focus on Survival	**Past** **Ambiguity** **Family**

rvices of the, the …to like take our kids from the, ent and told them off. This is the because I have kids who go to ncipal of the school, she was	Services Assistance Take Kids From Apartment Best Thing Kids Go to School [School] Principal Very Good	Vindication Agency Freedom Regaining Stability Educational Persuits	Being able to take his children to school has been a rewarding experience for the participant. He also had a positive interaction with their princial.	Gratitude	Hope for the Future Freedom and Opportunity	**Self-Advocacy and Justice** **Safety and Stability** **Hope**
happy about, uh…her kids, o school, um…uh…day to be	[Wife] So Happy Kids School Better	Regaining Stability	His wife is happy with their children going to school and does not have any other problems or concerns.	Gratitude Resuming Life	Hope for the Future Stability	**Safety and Stability** **Hope**
dest moment. The best, o like bring your kids to a safe time.	Best [Moment] Bring [Kids] Safe Place Same Time	Regaining Safety and Stability	Regaining safety and stability in the United States; moreso the former than the latter at this time, has been the participant's happiest moment since arriving.	Regaining Safety and Stability Resuming Life	Focus on Family Stability	**Resettlement Challenges** **Family** **Safety and Stability**
he, uh…study hard or not, they e. But here [in the United States] he will like get, uh…um…high ke good income. Uh…they [will] e for the kids.	Jordan Study Hard Or Not Same [United States] Study Maybe High Rank Job Good Income Safe Place	No Pre-Resettlement Agency Post-Resettlement Opportunities Safety and Stability	His children were unable to attend school in Jordan. And even if they were, they would not have been able to advance or improve their socioeconomic status with hard work because of the discrimination and prejudice. This is different in the United States, which the participant is happy about.	Resuming Life Reflecting on Differences Discrimination and Prejudice	Hypocracy/Government Corruption	**Past** **Hope** **Safety and Stability**
we were, uh…discussing that id, they said, "I will, I would like lot." The other one, doctor. And I'd like to be a officer, the police ge for me. Yeah, that's not far ge for me.	Discussing Pilot Doctor Police Office Strange Not Far	Hope for Change Future Possibilities	Discussed future career options with his children and realized how they will not be children for much longer. This illustrates how he has been able to give them an opportunity to pursue their dreams despite everything that happened in Syria and Jorda; they may have lost everything in Syria but the opportunities the children have in the United States are much better than had they never left.	Hope Resuming Education Regaining Safety and Stability	Hope for the Future Freedom and Opportunity	**Family** **Hope** **Ambiguity**
ings] are so, so different than tates]. Uh…we think that it Jnited States] would be like e, all the…if you get the like citizenship, uh…it might change.	Jordan So Different [Resettlement] Positive Get Green Card Citizenship Might Change Life	Positive Resettlement Experience Hope for Change Regaining Identity Life Changing Experience	Views coming to the United States as a life-changing event which will become more real with receipt of a green card and citizenship in the future.	Life-Changing Decision Hope	Hope for the Future	**Past** **Safety and Stability**
ı…highest- everybody dealing ssport…it's different than the	Get U.S. Passport Different	Regaining Identity and Respect	Anticipates being treated differently, with more respect, by others upon receipt of citizenship and passport.	Hope Reflecting on Differences	Freedom and Opportunity	**Safety and Stability**
; yeah, for sure. We can do many nited States].	Positive Many Things	Future Posibilities	Noted opportunities in the United States that he would not have in either Syria or Jordan.	Reflecting on Differences	Hypocracy/Government Corruption	**Hope**
ved [to the United States], uh…I the second week [I] feel more ist was…knows the, uh…the ow I can go everywhere.	Arrived Feeling Fear Second Week More Comfortable Area Go Everywhere	Decrease in Fear Post-Resettlement/Adjustment Freedom	Experienced fear immediately upon arrival but it gradually decreased; he feels more comfortable with life in the United States every week. Participant noted being free to travel within the United States without fear of being targeted or otherwise stopped.	Post-Resettlement/Adjustment Impressions of the U.S.	Psychological Impact Post-Resettlement/Adjustment	**Psychological Impact** **Safety and Stability**
one to, like, adjust to the, verything, like, [is] improving down.	First Adjust Area Everything Improving [Fear] Goes Down	Post-Resettlement/Adjustment Decrease in Fear	Fear decreases with increase adjustment to life in the United States.	Post-Resettlement/Adjustment	Psychological Impact	**Psychological Impact** **Hope**

	A lot, a lot of things [in the United States have made me feel welcome].	Feel Welcome	Feeling Welcome	Despite some negative incidents, participant has generally felt welcome in the United States.	Hope Resuming Life	Freedom and Opportunity	**Safety and Stability**
	In the, uh…in the Jordan if someone say, "Hello." I said like, "Welcome," they said, more than "Welcome."	Jordan Someone Say Hello Said [More]	Discrimination and Prejudice	Interactions in Jordan were superficial; people had alterior motives different from what they portrayed on the surface.	Hypocracy	Hypocracy/Government Corruption	**Past**
	But someone, if you tell him "Welcome," you can tell that it comes from, like, his side that is kind of not welcome.	Tell Him Welcome Not Welcome	Discrimination and Prejudice	Interactions in the United States, on the other hand, feel consistent; people do not have alterior motives different from how they present themselves.	Reflecting on Differences	Hypocracy/Government Corruption	**Danger and Oppression**
	It comes from…Yeah, it's like…This comparing, uh…uh…like…so happy here [in the United States].	Comparing So Happy [United States]	Resettlement Gratitude	Participant is much happier in the United States, for the previously noted reasons, than he was in Jordan.	Gratitude Resuming Life	Freedom and Opportunity Hope for the Future	**Safety and Stability**
✓	Because of the police saying, "Welcome" and…big difference than there [in Jordan or Syria]. And they gave us, like, the social security. They gave me the ID, that makes me like…that mean's, "You are welcome." That means, "God willing."	Police Welcome Big Difference Gave Us Social Security Gave Me ID Means Welcome God Willing	Regaining Safety and Stability Regaining Identity Future Possibilities	Participant's first interaction with the police in the United States was positive, and as such, increased his confidence about feeling welcome. His reference to being given identification and a social security number also illustrates in how much fear they lived in Jordan.	Belonging Regaining Safety and Stability Resuming Life	Hope for the Future	**Self-Advocacy and Justice** **Safety and Stability**

Holistic Summary

My interview with Maan lasted around 43-minutes and was conducted with assistance from an Arabic-speaking interpreter in the living room of an apartment. Maan only had time to meet early in the morning (i.e., 8:00 am) because he had to attend prayer and go to work. His wife was leaving; taking their children to school, so we could have privacy. I spent a few minutes introducing myself and answering questions. Maan is a 45-year-old married man with three adolescent daughters who lived with his immediate and extended family in Aleppo. He inherited a barbershop from his father when he was 15-years-old and married his current wife shortly thereafter. Maan left Syria in 2014 and lived in Jordan for nearly 2.5 years before coming to the United States mid-2016. They never wanted to come to the United States and held-out hope of returning to Syria while in Jordan, "'We rented a house in Jordan because we promised ourselves, 'next month we will go back to Syria'." Maan currently lives with his wife and their four children in a three-bedroom apartment. The family was initially separated into two apartments but Maan advocated for himself and their children, "I came to the United States to be together and not separate. If this is the law, I will go back to Syria."

Nine codes emerged during the interview. The first code is hope. Maan described being hopeful during each resettlement stage. This includes leaving Syria because "there was no way we would go back," moving to Jordan for an indefinite period, and applying for asylum to the United States. He lived in Jordan with his family for over two years despite not "feeling comfortable there." The opportunity to apply for asylum, along with the resettlement process to the United States, occurred quickly after waiting for a prolonged period. "We decided to come to the United States and it happened really, really quickly." Psychological impact is the second code. Maan described instability in Jordan (i.e., "Our life in Jordan was stable but not that stable") and inescapable anxiety because of oppression (i.e., "We were under pressure in Jordan, specifically Syrian men"). The third code is ambiguity. Maan explained being "unable to work or get an ID card" in Jordan. To that end, he was arrested by government agents for working and threatened with being sent back (i.e., "If you work again we will tell you to go back home to Syria"). These experiences subsequently led to persistent anxiety in the United States. Self-advocacy and justice is the fourth code. Despite being targeted in Jordan for his ethnicity and legal status, Maan advocated not only for himself but also his wife. He described a confrontation with Jordanians and the police, "They accused my wife of throwing rocks at a store but the store was so far away. Someone also complained about her hitting a baby with a rock or something." Maan defended his wife in front of a police officer by challenging him to replicate throwing a rock from the accused distance (i.e., "I went to the officer and said, 'I will give you 100 rocks. If you target the store and hit someone specific, I will go to jail'"). Maan also advocated for his family in the United States when they were separated, parents and children, in two apartments.
The fifth code is danger and oppression. This code extends from resettlement/migration (i.e., "We had problems in Syria, there is still trouble there") to post-resettlement/adjustment, particularly when Maan was separated from his children (i.e., "I was afraid. How can they let the kids sleep in the other apartment while I am in this apartment?"). Safety and stability is the sixth code. Drawing from his experience in Jordan, Maan felt like "part of this country after receiving an ID card." He also described looking forward to receiving a green card and citizenship in the future. The seventh code is family. Maan rarely referred to himself during the interview; he was primarily concerned with his children's wellbeing and security (i.e., "The best moment for me was when I brought my kids, all at the same time, to a safe place). Past is the eighth code. Maan compared the United States to not only Syria but also Jordan. He also expressed difficulties with being separated from his parents, "All my family are in Syria," who have since moved 400 miles south of Aleppo. Although relatively isolated from the conflict, there has recently been an increase in incidents. The ninth code is post-resettlement challenges. Maan described being afraid upon arrival to the United States but becoming more comfortable over time, "When I arrived in the United States, I felt afraid. By the second week I felt more comfortable. Everything is improving and my fear is going down."

The interpreter and I arrived at the apartment complex 10-minutes late, which was frustrating because Maan had other commitments and I had to get to the airport. The complex was a dull blue color and stacked in rows reminiscent of a motel, like the other participant's apartment complex. But the neighborhood was diverse from what I could see; a young African woman dressed in a bright yellow tribal dress was pushing a stroller down the sidewalk, two elderly Middle Eastern men wearing traditional white robes were having an enthusiastic conversation on the street corner, and five children of different ethnicities were waiting on the school bus nearby. While I wish the interview had been longer, the information I obtained was not only valuable but also consistent with what I had previously learned from other Syrian refugees.

Participant: Maan Ganim			
Possible Quote	**Resettlement Stage**	**Raw Data**	**Revised Clusters and Codes**
✓	**Pre-Resettlement**	[We had] a normal life, just working. It was life; we were working, and I was together with my family. We were in Aleppo. Yeah.	**Nostalgia (1x)** Normal Life Working Family Lived in City
✓	**Pre-Resettlement**	When I was like 15, I got it [a barbershop] from the parents, and started working. Um…then I got married. Yeah, barbershop. I was working in a barbershop from then on. Yeah.	**Nostalgia (2x)** Worked in Barbershop Adolescence **Interpersonal Relationship (1x)** Marriage
	Pre-Resettlement	[I have been with my wife for] um...around 14 years [and we have] six kids, [all of whom are in the U.S. with us]. [Their ages are]...um...okay, 18, 17, and going down.	**Interpersonal Relationship (1x)** Marriage Children
✓	**Resettlement/Migration**	We were, like, feeling fear [before we came to the United States]. We were…move- moving to Jordan. That was, uh…[our] life in Jordan; stable but not that much [stable]. Then we tried to [make] contact with some people who, uh…traveled [to the United States] before us. They were explaining to us, "It's a good life." Yeah. They, uh…uh…recommended us to come [to the United States] and, "You'll feel very good."	**Health Concern (1x)** Fear **Transitions (1x)** Leaving Syria Moving to Jordan **Instability and Uncertainty (1x)** Semi-Stable Life in Jordan **Second Chances (1x)** Prospect of Good Life in United States
	Resettlement/Migration	Uh…I will get, not get any advantages in Jordan. And later they [people who traveled to the United States before us] told us, uh…"It's not safe. You have to leave."	**Instability and Uncertainty (1x)** No Advantages **War (1x)** Unsafe in Jordan
	Resettlement/Migration	We had pressure, um…um…in Jordan, um…specifically on Syrian guys.	**Mistreatment (1x)** Pressure on Syrian Refugees
	Resettlement/Migration	Though, they [Syrian guys] were not able to work or get the ID.	**Mistreatment (1x)** Inability to Work Inability to Obtain Identification
	Resettlement/Migration	Then we decided to come to…here [the United States].	**Transitions (1x)** Decision to Leave
	Resettlement/Migration	Uh…I couldn't work. I still had, uh…family back [in Syria], uh…who didn't have income to be alive.	**Instability and Uncertainty (1x)** Inability to Work **Interpersonal Relationships (1x)** Extended Family in Syria **Mistreatment (1x)** Inability to Support Extended Family

✓	**Resettlement/Migration**	We sacrificed work. Then we, uh…got arrested from the government. The second day I went to go by someone and ask [about being released], "Okay, you can release them…they paid your money." A few…there was a warning about that. "If you, uh…work again we will, uh…like tell you to go back home...to Syria."	**Instability and Uncertainty (1x)** Sacrificing Work **War (1x)** Arbitrary Detention **Dismantled Social Systems and Institutions (1x)** Advocating for Release **Mistreatment (1x)** Threat of Deportation
✓	**Resettlement/Migration**	…it comes from the people, in general. Yeah because, "If you are from Syria, you are not welcome here [in Jordan] to work." Uh…it's kind of like, uh…verbal abuse. "All the Syrians got everything from us; we don't have jobs," is the statement of Jordan[ian] people.	**Mistreatment (1x)** Prejudice Anti-Refugee Sentiment
	Resettlement/Migration	So, I said, "Okay, it's better to go back [to Syria] than stay here [in Jordan]." Yeah, then we traveled to the United States.	**Instability and Uncertainty (1x)** Helplessness Prospects of Returning **Transitions (1x)** Coming to United States
	Resettlement/Migration	[It all happened] so fast, [it just took] four months…all of it.	**Transitions (1x)** Fast Resettlement Process
	Resettlement/Migration	The United Nations [UN] asked us to, uh…if, "You are interested to go [to the United States]?" and we got an acceptance. We would like to leave Jordan. They came [to us].	**Second Chances (1x)** Resettlement Offer
	Resettlement/Migration	Yeah, all of us. We, uh…like made kind of a meeting and we decided to go [to the United States].	**Interpersonal Relationships (1x)** Family Resettlement Decision
	Resettlement/Migration	Uh…the life, the life in Syria, it stopped.	**Instability and Uncertainty (1x)** Life Stopped
	Resettlement/Migration	We got, like, uh…rented a house [in Jordan] for a year because we promised ourselves, "The next month we'll go back to Syria, but…until we gave, gave up hope that, uh…[there is] no way to go back home [to Syria]."	**Instability and Uncertainty (1x)** Renting House in Jordan **Second Chances (1x)** Hopes of Returning **Transitions (1x)** Loss of Hope
	Resettlement/Migration	Then we decided [to come to the United States].	**Transitions (1x)** Resettlement Decision
	Resettlement/Migration	We were not feeling comfortable in Jordan. Then we asked the UN if that's possible to go anywhere else. They [the UN] said, "No…" In two years they [the UN] offered, uh… an application…to give us the option to go anywhere.	**Mistreatment (1x)** Uncomfortable in Jordan **Second Chances (1x)** Exploring Resettlement Opportunities **Resettlement Challenges (1x)** Hopelessness **Instability and Uncertainty (1x)** Waiting Two Years
	Resettlement/Migration	One of them [options] was the United States. I got, uh…I got the fast acceptance…when I got that call.	**Transitions (1x)** Fast Asylum Acceptance

	Resettlement/Migration	When I went back to…went back to my house, I explained to my wife and my kids. They said, "Okay, we will go [to the United States]." We took that decision then, at that time.	**Interpersonal Relationships (1x)** Family Resettlement Decision
	Resettlement/Migration	[It happened really, really quick]. Yes, the fastest decision because [there were] no more options. Just the United States.	**Transitions (1x)** No Options Left Fast Asylum Acceptance
✓	**Resettlement/Migration**	We were having trouble with our neighbors that, uh…enjoyment with our kids – to leave this problem [in Jordan] with the neighbors. And when, uh…like…my son was age 12…when he go and used the stairs – downstairs or upstairs – all the neighbors [would say], "The Syrian guy is coming. The Syrian guy…"	**Mistreatment (1x)** Prejudice Stereotyping
✓	**Resettlement/Migration**	This made it some[what] stressful for me. It made us, like, uh…anxious [a] little bit.	**Health Concerns (1x)** Stress Anxiety
✓	**Resettlement/Migration**	It was not secure in Jordan. We, we…the kids, they didn't go to school. uh…they didn't go to school. But she was so, so happy…about, uh…when they [the family] would move to the United States; all the kids would go back to school.	**Instability and Uncertainty (1x)** No Security in Jordan No Schools **Second Chances (1x)** Happy About Resettlement Opportunity
	Resettlement/Migration	Uh…she was so happy because there were like accidents that happened…accidents happened that time, they accused her [his wife], uh…she threw rocks at a store. It's so far away, it's not like, uh…nobody can like, uh…be targeted by a gun…	**Mistreatment (1x)** False Accusation Discrimination
	Resettlement/Migration	…but [Jordanians] said that she did that. And, uh…that happened [when] she had someone [with her] – a baby or something – and they complained [about] her…to the police officer or something, which made a lot of trouble.	**Mistreatment (1x)** False Accusations **Dismantled Social Systems and Institutions (1x)** Problems with Police
	Resettlement/Migration	I went to the officers and said…"I will give you 100 rocks. If you target that place and hit someone specific, I will be at the jail." It would be like, uh…far away from me…or get away from me.	**Dignity and Identity (1x)** Defending Wife
	Resettlement/Migration	A lot of stories. We have a lot of stories.	**Resettlement Challenges (1x)** Stories and Experiences
	Post-Resettlement/Adjustment	[We lived in Jordan for] two years and a half [years]. Yeah. [Then] we go to the Italy. Then Miami and Florida. Then San Antonio. It was very, very comfortable.	**Instability and Uncertainty (1x)** Life in Jordan **Transitions (1x)** Coming to United States
	Post-Resettlement/Adjustment	All the kids, [it was] the first time they traveled by airplane. And they, it was like a good experience for them. And they were so happy about that.	**Second Chances (1x)** Happy for Resettlement
	Post-Resettlement/Adjustment	I couldn't like describe that [first] day [in the United States].	**Second Chances (1x)** Describing First Day in United States
	Resettlement/Migration	And on the other hand, there's many people, they are good [compared to others who were bad in Jordan]. But, uh…I have like [a] bad experience with many [people] there [in Jordan]; I just remember that, that stuff.	**Mistreatment (1x)** Bad Experiences in Jordan Recognizing Good People
	Post-Resettlement/Adjustment	We still, like, uh…miss many people there [in Jordan]. And we still communicate with them, until now.	**Resettlement Challenges (1x)** Separation from Family and Friends

	Post-Resettlement/Adjustment	All the…my family are in Syria. I was living in the main city, in Jabal [Jabal Sem'an], in Aleppo. But my origin, [is] from the, the Ayn al-Arab [region].	**Resettlement Challenges (1x)** Separation from Family and Friends
	Post-Resettlement/Adjustment	All of them, they are…they were fine.	**Nostalgia (1x)** Family Safety
	Resettlement/Migration	Uh…three daughters, they…um…refused to go to the school in Jordan. I didn't know what was, the specific reasons.	**Instability and Uncertainty (1x)** No School **Mistreatment (1x)** Unknown Reason for School Refusal
	Post-Resettlement/Adjustment	Harassment there, maybe. Yeah, uh…I promised them, uh…when, when, uh…"When we go to the United States, you'll go back to school." And that was like so happy for them.	**Mistreatment (1x)** Harassment **Second Chances (1x)** Promise of School
✓	**Post-Resettlement/Adjustment**	It was the best time [coming to the United States] for them [my daughters].	**Second Chances (1x)** Opportunities for Daughters
✓	**Post-Resettlement/Adjustment**	Uh…I was thinking all the people [are] equal [in the United States].	**Dismantled Social Systems and Institutions (1x)** Equality in United States
	Post-Resettlement/Adjustment	Nobody, uh…like, gets more than others. When I, uh…arrived to the United States I got the ID. Uh…I was, I was feeling comfortable if I went anywhere, I will like show them the ID.	**Dignity and Identity (1x)** Comfort Access to Identification
	Resettlement/Migration	Even in Jordan I was not able to drive any cars. We don't have any rights or advantages in Jordan but, just here [in the United States]; feeling, uh…good. It's very good.	**Mistreatment (1x)** Discrimination Anti-Refugee Sentiment **Second Chances (1x)** Feeling Good in United States
	Pre-Resettlement	Yeah, we had problems and, even in Syria, it's still trouble there. But if you move to the, uh…other country and you get the ID…in five years you will get the, uh…citizenship; you will start your life.	**Dismantled Social Systems and Institutions (1x)** Problems in Syria **Second Chances (1x)** Resuming Life in United States
	Post-Resettlement/Adjustment	I got the [approval] decision very fast, uh…a lot of people from Syria traveled to the United States. They, uh…more than seven months, eight months. I had contact with them many times; I have a lot of information about the United States. I know, uh…the United States has many, like, uh…ethnicities, religions, cultures, uh…finally, no differences between all of these, uh….	**Transitions (1x)** Fast Asylum Decision Knowledge of United States **Dismantled Social Systems and Institutions (1x)** Equality in United States
	Post-Resettlement/Adjustment	It is in the Islam basis, like, no differences between, uh…white [people] and, um…black [people] or Arabic, uh…Arabic speakers; even just for the faith.	**Dismantled Social Systems and Institutions (1x)** Law and Policy in Syria
	Resettlement/Migration	People…[I had] contact with them before we came [to the United States].	**Interpersonal Relationships (1x)** Friends in United States
	Resettlement/Migration	No one…in Texas, most of them [are] far away from Texas, uh…Arizona, um…New Jersey [in English]…Washington. I forgot most of them.	**Interpersonal Relationships (1x)** Friends in United States
	Resettlement/Migration	We, uh…we had two options. The first, if you have someone…you know them, um…you can go in the, in the same place. If not, they will send you someplace [else].	**Resettlement Challenges (1x)** Destination Choices

	Post-Resettlement/Adjustment	I doesn't like, get like, um…I got the second choice. New baby, uh…newborn [was the first thing I thought of when I landed].	**Resettlement Challenges (1x)** Community Resettlement Destination **Interpersonal Relationships (1x)** Birth of Child
✓	**Post-Resettlement/Adjustment**	Yes. I had like, uh…crowded in my mind about the future. But when I arrived here [in the United States] I got so excited about that [having a child].	**Health Concerns (1x)** Worried About Future Crowded Thoughts **Second Chances (1x)** Arrival to United States Excited About Future
✓	**Post-Resettlement/Adjustment**	And feeling comfortable and safe. No way to [be] thinking about the past. I would like to start the, uh…new life.	**Second Chances (1x)** Forgetting Past Starting Life
	Post-Resettlement/Adjustment	Unimaginable…[is how I would describe my life, and my family's life, since coming to the United States].	**Second Chances (1x)** Describing Life in United States
	Post-Resettlement/Adjustment	…uh, the weather changed; everything changed. But we adjusted with the, this country…very easy….Yeah, the first week we were like losing the time and, uh…and darkness or brightness of the, uh…time. After one month we adjusted and adopted with the environment. We can go anywhere.	**Resettlement Challenges (1x)** Adjusting to Life in United States
	Pre-Resettlement	I was, uh…thinking, "I'm in my hometown…because everybody's working and they respect me and my family." Uh…for a period of time we missed the respect from, from the people. But when we reached the United States, it's different. If…in Syria if the like government or the officer or, uh…who's working…the minister, was sucking blood and everything.	**Nostalgia (1x)** Culture in Syria **Dignity and Identity (1x)** Loss of Respect **Second Chances (1x)** Better Life in United States **Dismantled Social Systems and Institutions (1x)** Corruption in Syria
	Post-Resettlement/Adjustment	Here [in the United States], it's so, so different than there [in Syria].	**Resettlement Challenges (1x)** Cultural Differences
	Post-Resettlement/Adjustment	Catholic Charities; I had like, uh…one situation with, uh…someone in the Catholic Charities.	**Resettlement Challenges (1x)**
	Post-Resettlement/Adjustment	She was from [the] Arab region. They are eight here in this, uh…house. Uh…that caseworker who was working for the Catholic Charities, she got two apartments for us.	**Resettlement Challenges (1x)** Housing Concerns
	Post-Resettlement/Adjustment	She said that, "Kids will sleep in the, uh…apartment and you, uh…you and your wife will stay in other, the other apartment."	**Resettlement Challenges (1x)** Family Separation
	Post-Resettlement/Adjustment	We said, "All my kids, they are still young. I come to the United States to be together, not like separate." She said, "This is the law here [in the United States]."	**Interpersonal Relationships (1x)** Young Children Dependence on Parents **Dismantled Social Systems and Institutions (1x)** Law in United States

	Post-Resettlement/Adjustment	I said, "Impossible that law [exists] here in the United States, like this." I spoke out and I said, "I have to talk to with the, uh…boss of the, this organization. If this [is] the law I will go back to my home [in Syria]."	**Resettlement Challenges (1x)** Anger Housing Problems **Dismantled Social Systems and Institutions (1x)** Self-Advocacy
	Post-Resettlement/Adjustment	The second day, the second day the, uh…chairman of that organization, she said, "No, that's not the rule."	**Dismantled Social Systems and Institutions (1x)** Resolution to Housing Problems
	Post-Resettlement/Adjustment	Then they moved them [the children] from that apartment, or complex, to this complex. This is my right in the United States.	**Interpersonal Relationships (1x)** Family Reunification Sharing Same Apartment **Dismantled Social Systems and Institutions (1x)** Rights in United States
	Post-Resettlement/Adjustment	Like, uh…she [the caseworker from Catholic Charities] was from Palestine…that lady…and she, and she doesn't know what kind of program about the system.	**Mistreatment (1x)** Discrimination Based on Ethnicty **Dismantled Social Systems and Institutions (1x)** Unfamiliar with Laws in United States
	Post-Resettlement/Adjustment	But I was, by myself, I am feel fear, "How can [they] let the kids sleep in the other place and I am [in] this place?"	**Health Concerns (1x)** Fear of Separation from Children
	Post-Resettlement/Adjustment	And, uh…the previous apartment, which we got, is – between this apartment and the other – more than one kilometer. It's so far away.	**Resettlement Challenges (1x)** Housing Concerns Parent-Child Separation
	Post-Resettlement/Adjustment	I got that apartment before but I couldn't like sleep. I said, "No, they will not leave my apartment. If no way, I will go back home [to Syria]."	**Health Concerns (1x)** Inability to Sleep **Dismantled Social Systems and Institutions (1x)** Doubting Laws in United States **Transitions (1x)** Threatening to Return
	Post-Resettlement/Adjustment	I told for the, uh…[caseworker] from Palastine. "I am feeling fear for myself. I couldn't know where I can go. I don't know any place here [in the United States]."	**Health Concerns (1x)** Fear **Resettlement Challenges (1x)** Loneliness Unfamiliarity
	Post-Resettlement/Adjustment	The second day I asked, to the, um…chairman of the- that organization. she…she came by herself. She was so, so perfect. How she treated us, very well.	**Dignity and Identity (1x)** Being Respected
	Post-Resettlement/Adjustment	She said, "No." I said, "I came here [to the United States] together with our kids, not like to separate [us from] them."	**Dignity and Identity (1x)** Family United
	Post-Resettlement/Adjustment	We already got all the, uh…procedures from [Catholic Charities] but, uh…by the caseworker.	**Resettlement Challenges (1x)** Legal Process
✓	**Post-Resettlement/Adjustment**	I got the, uh…vaccination. I got…I filled out many forms, applications. We got the social, uh…security cards. We got the health insurance. I got like, uh…when I got the, uh…security, uh…social security card. I was feeling very, very comfortable… because it's like, kind of, to be part of this, uh...[country].	**Resettlement Challenges (1x)** Legal Process Navigating Asylum **Dignity and Identity (1x)** Belonging

	Post-Resettlement/Adjustment	I said, "Impossible that law [exists] here in the United States, like this." I spoke out and I said, "I have to talk to with the, uh…boss of the, this organization. If this [is] the law I will go back to my home [in Syria]."	**Resettlement Challenges (1x)** Anger Housing Problems **Dismantled Social Systems and Institutions (1x)** Self-Advocacy
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	Post-Resettlement/Adjustment	Then they moved them [the children] from that apartment, or complex, to this complex. This is my right in the United States.	**Interpersonal Relationships (1x)** Family Reunification Sharing Same Apartment **Dismantled Social Systems and Institutions (1x)** Rights in United States
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	Post-Resettlement/Adjustment	But I was, by myself, I am feel fear, "How can [they] let the kids sleep in the other place and I am [in] this place?"	**Health Concerns (1x)** Fear of Separation from Children
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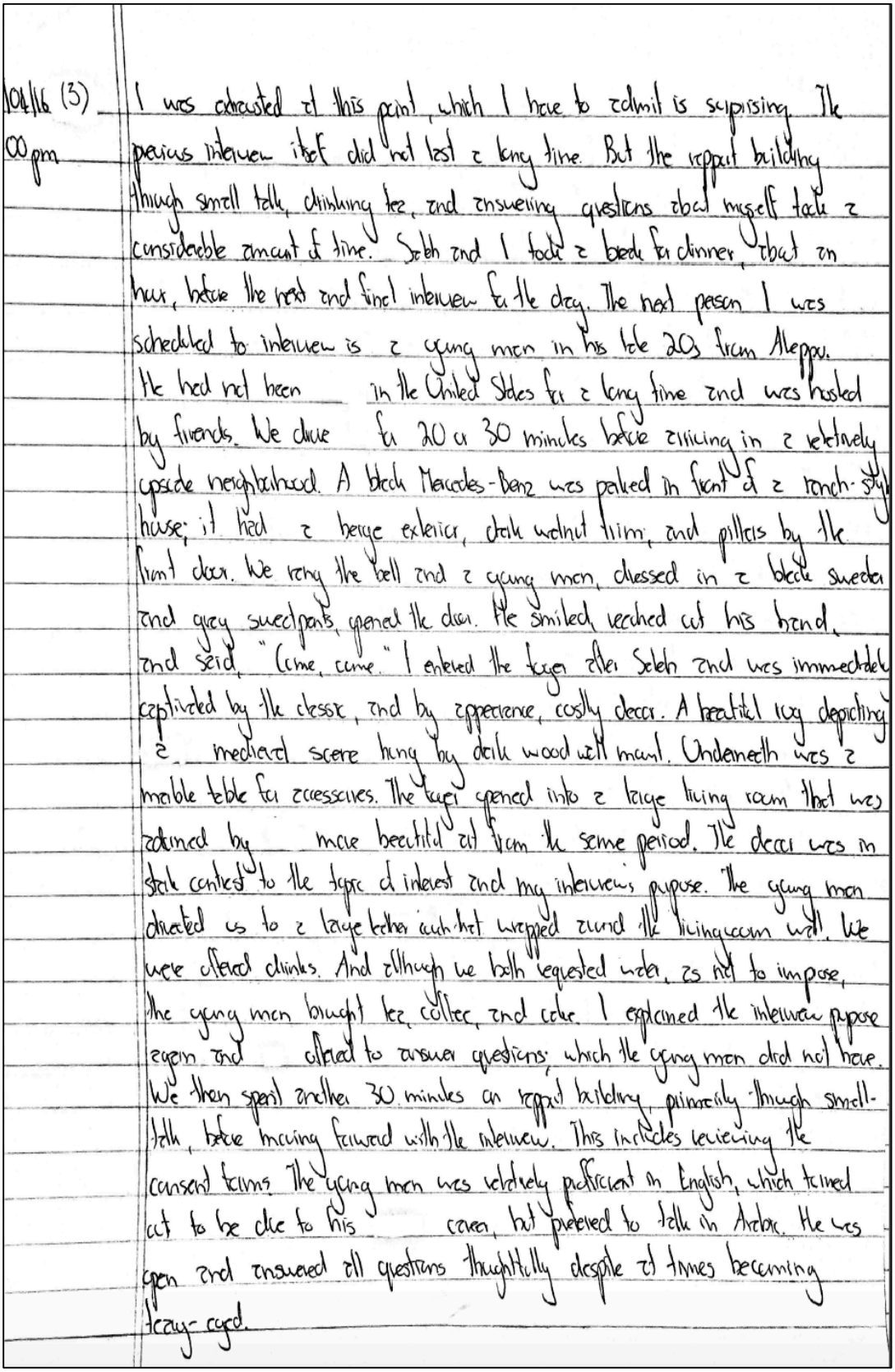
	Post-Resettlement/Adjustment	For the positive stuff, yeah, for sure. We can do many things here [in the United States].	**Second Chances (1x)** Opportunities in United States
✓	**Post-Resettlement/Adjustment**	When I, uh…we arrived [to the United States], uh…I was feeling fear. And the second week [I] feel more comfortable. I was just was…knows the, uh…the area, surrounding. Now I can go everywhere.	**Instability and Uncertainty (1x)** Initial Resettlement Fear **Second Chances (1x)** Gradual Comfort
	Post-Resettlement/Adjustment	Yeah, I was the first one to, like, adjust to the, uh…the, the area…Everything, like, [is] improving and that [fear] goes down.	**Second Chances (1x)** Adjusting to Life in United States
	Post-Resettlement/Adjustment	A lot, a lot of things [in the United States have made me feel welcome].	**Dignity and Identity (1x)** Beloning
	Resettlement/Migration	In the, uh…in the Jordan if someone say, "Hello." I said like, "Welcome," they said, more than "Welcome."	**Instability and Uncertainty (1x)** Ulterior Motives in Jordan
	Resettlement/Migration	But someone, if you tell him "Welcome," you can tell that it comes from, like, his side that is kind of not welcome.	**Mistreatment (1x)** Alterior Motives in Jordan Disrespect in Jordan
	Post-Resettlement/Adjustment	It comes from…Yeah, it's like…This comparing, uh…uh…like…so happy here [in the United States].	**Second Chances (1x)** Happy in United States **Resettlement Challenges (1x)** Cultural Differences
	Post-Resettlement/Adjustment	Because of the police saying, "Welcome" and…big difference than there [in Jordan or Syria]. And they gave us, like, the social security. They gave me the ID, that makes me like…that mean's, "You are welcome." That means, "God willing."	**Dignity and Identity (1x)** Belonging



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I was exhausted at this point, which I have to admit is surprising. The previous interview itself did not last a long time. But the rapport building through small talk, drinking tea, and answering questions about myself took a considerable amount of time. Seth and I took a break for dinner, about an hour, before the next and final interview for the day. The next person I was scheduled to interview is a young man in his late 20s from Aleppo. He had not been in the United States for a long time and was hosted by friends. We drove for 20 or 30 minutes before arriving in a relatively upscale neighborhood. A black Mercedes-Benz was parked in front of a ranch-style house; it had a beige exterior, dark walnut trim, and pillars by the front door. We rang the bell and a young man, dressed in a black sweater and grey sweatpants, opened the door. He smiled, reached out his hand, and said, "Come, come." I entered the foyer after Seth and was immediately captivated by the classic, and by appearance, costly decor. A beautiful rug depicting a medieval scene hung by dark wood wall mount. Underneath was a marble table for accessories. The foyer opened into a large living room that was adorned by more beautiful art from the same period. The decor was in stark contrast to the topic of interest and my interviews purpose. The young man directed us to a large leather couch that wrapped around the livingroom wall. We were offered drinks. And although we both requested water, as not to impose, the young man brought tea, coffee, and coke. I explained the interview purpose again and offered to answer questions, which the young man did not have. We then spent another 30 minutes on rapport building, primarily through small-talk, before moving forward with the interview. This includes reviewing the consent forms. The young man was relatively proficient in English, which turned out to be due to his career, but preferred to talk in Arabic. He was open and answered all questions thoughtfully despite at times becoming teary-eyed.